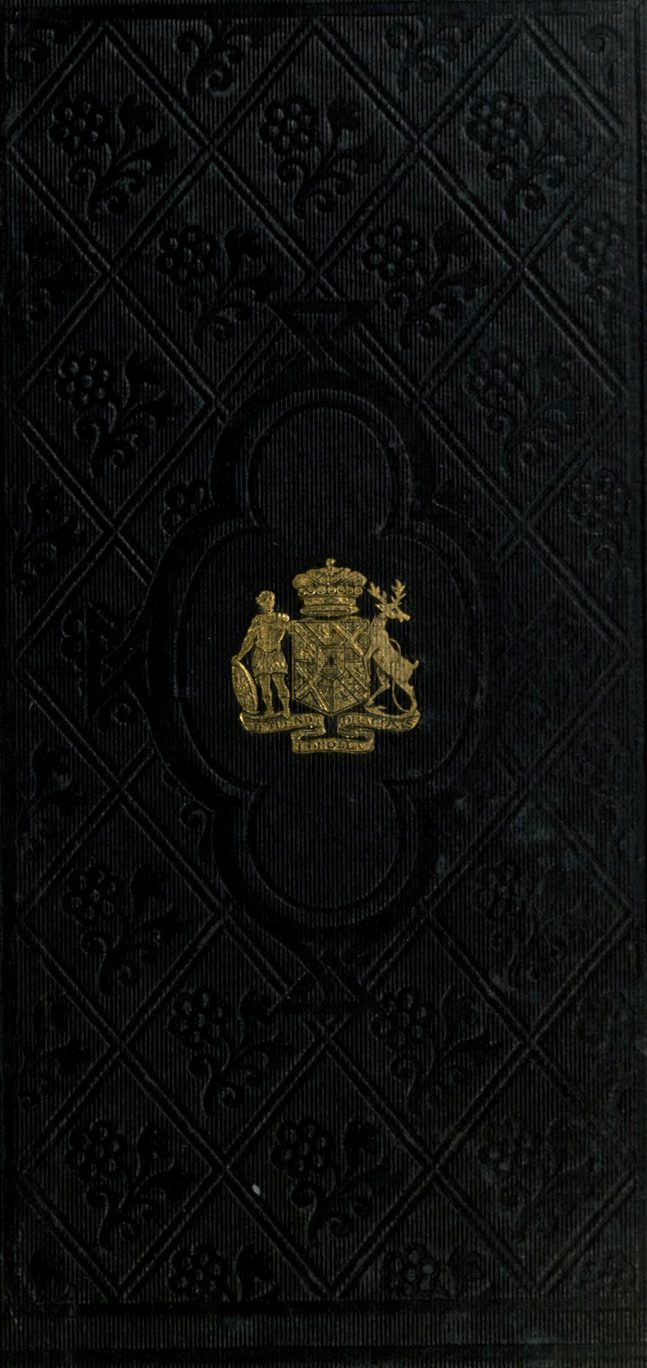
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
3 1761 01661653 4



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2007 with funding from
Microsoft Corporation

http://www.archive.org/details/centuryofgreatac00armsuoft

A CENTURY OF GREAT ACTORS

1750–1850

A SELECTION FROM

MILLS & BOON'S

LIST OF GENERAL LITERATURE

MY PARISIAN YEAR. By MAUDE ANNESLEY. With 20 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

MY SUDAN YEAR. By E. S. STEVENS. With 40 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

THE MAN WHO SAVED AUSTRIA: The Life and Times of Baron Jellačić. By M. HARTLEY. With 18 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

A MYSTIC ON THE PRUSSIAN THRONE: Frederick William II. By GILBERT STANHOPE. With 12 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

A CENTURY OF GREAT ACTORS. By CECIL F. ARMSTRONG, Author of "The Dramatic Author's Companion." With 16 Illustrations. Demy 8vo, 10s. 6d. net.

THE ROMANCE OF THE MEN OF DEVON. By FRANCIS GRIBBLE, Author of "The Romance of the Oxford Colleges." With a Frontispiece in Photogravure and 16 Illustrations. Crown 8vo, 6s.

FORTY YEARS OF A SPORTSMAN'S LIFE. By Sir CLAUDE CHAMPION DE CRESPIGNY, Bart. With 18 Illustrations. Popular Edition. 6s.

SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS ON THE STAGE. By Mrs. CHARLES CALVERT. With a Photogravure and 17 Illustrations. Popular Edition. 6s.

A CENTURY OF BALLADS (1810–1910). Their Composers and Singers. By HAROLD SIMPSON. With 49 Illustrations. Popular Edition. 6s.

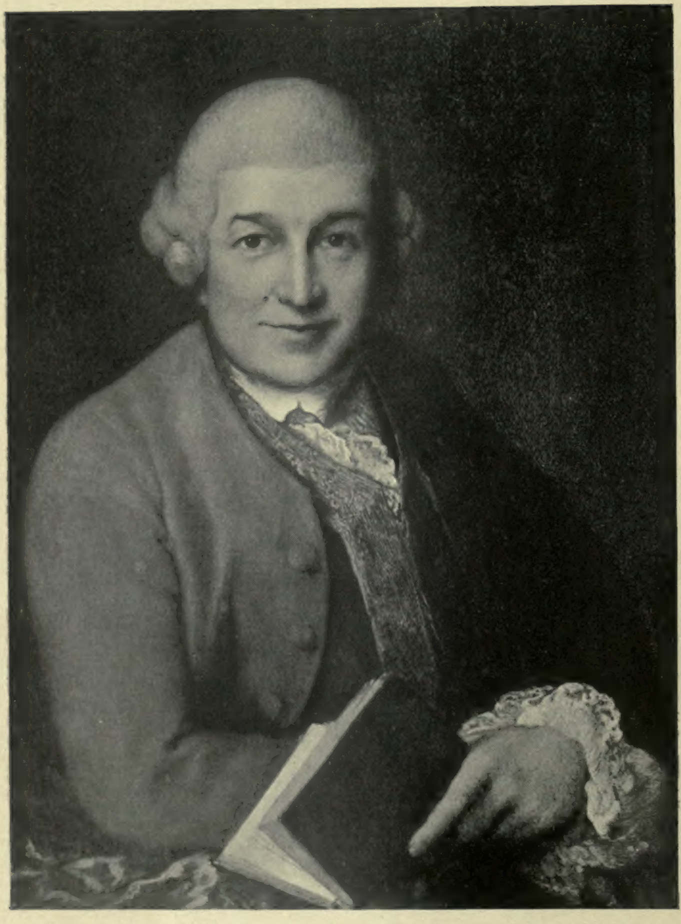
BRITISH MOUNTAIN CLIMBS. By GEORGE D. ABRAHAM, Fully Illustrated with Photographs and Diagrams. Pocket size. New Edition. 5s. net.

SWISS MOUNTAIN CLIMBS. By GEORGE D. ABRAHAM. Uniform with the above. New Edition. 5s. net.

THE ZOO CONVERSATION BOOK (Hughie's Second Visit). By EDMUND SELOUS. With 12 Illustrations by J. A. SHEPHERD. Crown 8vo, 5s. net.

RAMBLES IN FLORENCE. By G. E. TROUTBECK, Author of "Stories from Italian History." With 8 Illustrations in Colour, and 32 from Photographs. Crown 8vo, 6s.

RAMBLES IN IRELAND. By ROBERT LYND, Author of "Home Life in Ireland." With 5 Illustrations in Colour, and 24 from Photographs. Crown 8vo, 6s.



DAVID GARRICK.

(From the portrait, by Gainsborough, in the collection of Mrs. Fleischmann.)

A CENTURY OF GREAT ACTORS

1750-1850

BY

CECIL FERARD ARMSTRONG

AUTHOR OF "THE DRAMATIC AUTHOR'S COMPANION,"
"THE ACTOR'S COMPANION," ETC. ETC.

"All the world's a stage."—*Shakespeare*

WITH 16 ILLUSTRATIONS

MILLS & BOON, LIMITED
49 RUPERT STREET
LONDON W.

LIBRARY
JUN 26 1969
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Published 1912

PN
2597
A75

CONTENTS

		PAGE
INTRODUCTORY		1

TRAGEDY

DAVID GARRICK	1717–1779	8
SPRANGER BARRY	1719–1777	72
JOHN HENDERSON	1747–1785	87
GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE	1756–1811	102
JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE	1757–1823	116
EDMUND KEAN	1787–1833	146
WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY	1793–1873	220
CHARLES JOHN KEAN	1811 (?)–1868	288

PRODIGY

WILLIAM HENRY WEST BETTY	1791–1874	316

COMEDY

CHARLES MACKLIN	1690 (?)–1797	327
JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN	1758–1832	358
JOSEPH GRIMALDI	1779–1837	371
CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS	1803–1878	381

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

FREDERICK ROBSON	1822 (?)–1864	402

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

David Garrick (from the portrait by Gainsborough in the collection of Mrs. Fleischmann) . . *Frontispiece*

TO FACE PAGE

Garrick as "Abel Drugger" . . . 70

Spranger Barry 72

John Henderson as "Macbeth" . . . 87

G. F. Cooke as "Richard III" . . . 102

John Philip Kemble 116

Edmund Kean 146

Edmund Kean as "Richard III" . . . 214

William Charles Macready 220

Charles John Kean 288

William Henry West Betty ("Master Betty") . 316

Charles Macklin (from the portrait by John Opie, R.A.) 327

Joseph Shepherd Munden 358

Joseph Grimaldi 371

Charles James Mathews 381

Frederick Robson 402

The Medallion on the Cover is a portrait of David Garrick.

A CENTURY OF GREAT ACTORS

1750–1850

INTRODUCTORY

IT is not easy to write about actors. There is danger if they are alive and the risk of dullness if they are dead.

Few things apparently interest the average person more than a real live actor, and few things bore them more than a dead one! This is partly because too much attention is generally paid to the personality of the actor, but principally because his reign, like a king's, ceases when he dies—sometimes before. But we can read the history of that reign, and can, to a certain extent, tell what manner of man the king was. Moreover, we are, some of us, that is to say, naturally interested in those who have tended the sacred lamp of the drama and kept it burning for some definite period of time. Actors do leave foot-prints on the sands of time. Tradition keeps their memory green, traditional pieces of business are sometimes remembered when their originator is forgotten. Sometimes both are remembered and always associated. Macklin and his *Shylock* are a living force in the drama to-day. Irving's business of *Shylock's* returning to his empty house will for ever be associated with him. It may be said that it is not in Shakespeare, but it *is*, though not actually written down. *Shylock* certainly did return to his empty house, and why should we not see him do it. Now there are more things in our drama than Shakespeare ever dreamt of, with all his wonderful dreaming. Great actors do, in a measure, live after they are dead. Garrick, Kean, Robson, still thrill us and make the blood course and curdle in our veins, though we never had the good fortune to see them act.

But we read their lives, we study their characters, and we know that the age of such giants as Johnson, Burke, Sheridan, Pope, Gainsborough, Reynolds, and Hogarth went "horn-mad" over a little man, whose wonderful features have been handed down to us by a dozen of great painters; whose life and character those who run may read, in his hundreds of letters; whose consummate abilities were recognized by colleagues whom they had supplanted, and whose greatest triumph was *Lear*, a garbled *Lear* it is true, but still *Lear*. Such was David Garrick. Those who had seen him, had seen Quin and Betterton, and we have the advantage of their comparison. Then came Barry, Henderson, Cooke, Kemble, Macklin; after that, a slight pause, and Edmund Kean flashes into the limelight.

We read of the effects of his playing, and are thrilled at the mere mention of some of the happenings amongst his audience. . . . There were those who saw both Kean and Garrick, and again we have the benefit of their comparisons. We read contemporary criticisms of his playing, study the characters he played and his own character, and, so to speak, reconstruct the crime. His two greatest performances were "*Richard III*" and "*Othello*." In each of them he was great in the most vital and essential points in the play. The opening of his *Richard* is all bustle and business; he is bitter with his shrivelled arm, and feels as intensely as only deformed people can and do feel. A curious saturnine compelling grace makes the scene with the *Lady Anne* convincing. Like *Richard* himself, Edmund Kean rose superior to physical disabilities and fought them to the last. In *Othello*, Kean was best in the best parts. In the great third act, perhaps the most terribly tragic moment in the play—for *Othello* is stumbling over the precipice, and we cannot stop him, can only lean over and watch for the crash—Kean was sublime. The raging in the Tubal scene in "*The Merchant of Venice*" was never forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to see it. That handful of an audience did not nearly shout the house down because they were taken in by spurious coin, but carried away by the real article, by acting such as they had seen in their dreams, knew in their hearts, and had been waiting for all their lives. In circumstantial evidence three things count especially: the quantity of evidence, the quality of the evidence, and the character and qualifications of the witnesses who give the evidence. Three kingdoms and two continents bore testimony to Kean's powers. Much of the evidence was expert evidence.

There was not much about acting that Munden or Macready did not know. Nothing but a paralytic stroke would make such a pig-headed old stager as Munden change his views, and he very nearly got one when Kean set out to change them and show what he could do with *Sir Giles Overreach.* Byron actually did get convulsions. Macready's praise was not easy to get, but Kean got it. Talma was doubly amazed, partly at Kean's powers, partly that such a gem should be allowed to remain uncut so long in our midst. Mrs. Garrick, in her admiration, forsook a very feminine failing and actually admitted merit in some one other than her ideal.

After Kean's sad departure, tragedy was mainly in the hands of Macready, who came near being a very great tragedian. Charles Kean and Samuel Phelps followed and carefully and honourably tended the flame, after which it burned lower in tragedy but more brightly in comedy; and out of comedy sprang the last great dramatic genius, little Frederick Robson. On his comic little shoulders he bore the burden of tragedy as well as burlesque, and those who saw him knew that the real thing was come again. There were some who said that the little man's electric flashes reminded them strangely of Kean. Robson went all too soon, and was succeeded by a great actor who was a still greater man.

Sir Henry Irving was perhaps the greatest personality who ever trod the English stage, and in that capacity made his calling respected and revered as it never was before. To go farther would be to enter the fields of prophecy, and this book is a retrospect.

The century covered by it—1750–1850—seems to have been the hey-day of English acting. It saw the zenith of Garrick, Barry, Macklin, and of such lesser lights as Foote, Mossop, Powell, King, Lewis, Sheridan, Henderson, Kemble, Elliston, Munden, Liston, Bannister, Grimaldi, who were all born and died within its limits. It saw the rise and fall of the great Edmund Kean, of G. F. Cooke, and J. B. Booth. Macready, Phelps, Charles Kean, and Charles Mathews did their best work within its confines. It was not an era of dramatists but of actors. Certainly there were some great dramatists—Goldsmith, Sheridan, Coleman, Murphy, Home, Lytton; but of these only the first two can claim anything approaching immortality. The others are all dead and gone, with the possible exception of Lytton, who occasionally rises from the grave, on very special occasions, to show us that he never really lived. With the exception of Shakespeare, Sheridan, and Goldsmith, the most popular plays of the period were those which offered the finest acting opportunities, and even Shakespeare was often woefully altered to suit the greatness of the ambition and smallness of the intellect of some popular actor of the period. "*Venice Preserved*," "*The Wonder*," "*Douglas*," "*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*," "*The Stranger*," "*The Iron Chest*," "*Virginius*," "*Pizarro*," form an array of fine acting plays.

Our century was essentially a century of stars. It has been said that all nature is run upon the star-system. Perhaps so, but it is a dark night when there is only one star twinkling in the sky, and no amount of lonesomeness will make that star look like a planet if it is not one. On the other hand, it will shine all the brighter for the conjunction of its satellites.

The earth is certainly brighter for the moon, and probably the moon is brighter for the earth.

During the period we have chosen there were few theatres in London, and the stars were compelled to constellate. And from all accounts, it was a better time to see them when they did that than when they were shooting about the country dazzling whatever part of the firmament they happened to be in. To be seen at his best an actor must be among the best. The Jam of Nawanagar could not shine properly at a village cricket match!

Most of our stars, too, were content to confine their attention to acting. They did not, with very few exceptions, burden themselves with the cares of management. Garrick, it is true, was a manager, but in partnership, and he confined himself to the duties of producing and playing, and even then the worries of the former drove him prematurely from the stage. John Philip Kemble was also only a partner. Macready gave up management. Charles Kean excelled in it more than in his acting. If these two had combined instead of bickered, there might have been splendid results. Macklin and Barry were both the worse for their experiments in management, so was the drama. Charles Mathews was terribly hampered by management, which was probably the last straw that broke poor nervous little Robson's back. One trembles to think what would have happened to any theatre that Edmund Kean or G. F. Cooke had tried to manage! Even those great geniuses that seem able to do anything, cannot do more than one thing at a time.

The life of an actor in our century made for improvement in his art. He was generally born, bred and brought up in the atmosphere of the green-room—the right atmosphere for an actor. He will learn more about life there and how to portray it than at the Court, or in the courts. More by acting plays than by reading them, but most by both. Practice must go hand in hand in art. Unless one puts in practice what one already knows, one cannot progress.

And, greatest thing of all, Shakespeare was part of the actor's stock-in-trade. As often as not he sucked it in with his mother's milk. When poor Edmund Kean tramped from one end of the country to the other with his child on his back, his poor wife toiling by his side, and nothing in his stomach, he had Shakespeare in his heart.

That was the secret of his success, and that was what his genius fed on. That is why he knew he would succeed.

It is true that Garrick, perhaps the greatest genius of them all, was not born on the stage but in one of those little out-of-the-way nooks where genius sometimes likes to lay her eggs. But as soon as he had pecked his shell open, he flew like a homing pigeon to the green-room, and hung about there for months, even years, before he actually became an active and acting member of it.

There are those who are waiting for another great dramatist to appear. Why not another great actor? And why only one? Let us have as many as we can get—great dramas and great actors; single-minded geniuses making it their business to write, produce or act plays as well as they can and not better than somebody else can. In our century—1750–1850—"there were giants in the land," and giants not above gorging themselves upon their lesser brethren. What if the days of such giants are passed? So much the better. We shall get the Great Company and the Great Drama.

In conclusion, my thanks for permission to reproduce the magnificent "'Garrick' by Gainsborough," in her possession, are due to Mrs. Fleischmann; to Mr. Eustace Pinkerton for permission to use his engraving of Stuart's "John Philip Kemble," and I have had the inestimable advantage of the use of the theatrical library of the Garrick Club.

C. F. A.

June, 1912

DAVID GARRICK

DAVID GARRICK forms a fitting headstone to a century of great actors. His genius as an actor and producer and the influence he exercised upon the stage of his time, an influence that has been felt ever since, entitle him to the position.

He was born at Hereford, 19th February, 1716, and was baptized in All Saints' church in that city the same month. His parentage is extremely interesting to those interested in national characteristics and heredity, for his father was of French Huguenot extraction, of the blood of the de la Rochefoucaulds, and his mother was Irish. What could one expect from such a union? Given such ingredients, the merest tyro in the theory of heredity would at once produce such an one as David Garrick. The unconscious instruments did so in practice, but not at once, for Garrick was their third child, and, from all accounts, his elder brother and sister were quite without artistic aspirations of any sort or any sympathy with them. In after years it was only after a long siege and much evidence of the spoils of war that his brother finally capitulated.

The future great actor and reformer of the stage seems to have begun his career of reformation on the day he was born, for he was the son of an officer and a gentleman, an unusual, and perhaps unique distinction for an actor in those days. The father's name was

Peter Garric, formerly de la Garrique. He was, as I have already said, of Huguenot extraction, and was born in France, from whence he escaped as a child, settled with his parents in England, and finally obtained a commission in the army—regiment unknown—and came to reside at Lichfield. The future pride of the family was born, curiously enough, "on the road," his father being at that time quartered at Hereford on a recruiting tour.

His mother's name was Arabella Clough. Although of Irish descent, she was evidently a Protestant, as her father was a vicar-choral in Lichfield Cathedral.

Altogether, it would be difficult to imagine anything on the surface more antagonistic to his future calling than David's youthful environment. At the same time it is possible that it was not so antagonistic to the art as to the vocation, and that the maternal grandfather was not without his talents in that direction, nor altogether lacked opportunities of proclaiming and declaiming them. All things considered, David may not be such a "miracle" as he appeared. The sight of themselves without the trimmings individualized in David may have been the cause of some of the family's irritation. David got to work early, and in 1727, at the age of eleven, played the part of *Sergeant Kite* in Farquhar's "*Recruiting Officer.*"

David began his education, as far as books were concerned, at the Grammar School, Lichfield, under a Mr. Hunter, and it was completed in 1737, under the great Dr. Johnson at Edial, whither he went in company with his brother George. In the interim he spent a short time learning, or making a show of learning, the wine trade from an uncle in Lisbon. Although the business — though possibly not the wine — was distasteful to him, he undoubtedly acquired some information that was valuable to him in after years, when, as an entertainer and host, he was unrivalled even in those entertaining times. At school he seems to have been a high-spirited, merry, popular boy, and there are pleasant stories related of schoolfellows who, falling upon evil times, in after years made successful and fruitful appeals for assistance to the popular actor.

Whilst still at school he found himself in a responsible position, for his father received an irresistible offer to return to active service and go to Gibraltar, and upon David's shoulders, in spite of the fact that he was a younger son, appears to have devolved the main responsibility of the family of seven. Thus early did he enter into management!

He kept his father well supplied with letters, and this correspondence, now in the Forster collection in the South Kensington Museum, gives a good idea of the alert, merry, clever child he must have been—of the boy who was father to the man.

Whilst at school David made the acquaintance of a young man in the town called Johnson, afterwards the great Samuel Johnson. David and he would sometimes visit the theatre together, and it is recorded that even at that time David's natural instincts made him a better critic than Johnson with all his learning. On the return of Johnson from the university, David became his pupil at Edial as already related. Johnson's Academy was not a success, and in 1737 began the famous journey to London, when master and pupil both set out to make their fame and fortune. Both achieved the former, and our hero the latter.

The fame of both, too, curiously enough rests largely upon hearsay evidence. The mighty works of Johnson still live, but it is chiefly to the immortal biography that he owes his own immortality.

The relationship of master and pupil never seems to have been quite lost between the two, and to the last there was a certain amount of patronage, not unmingled, perhaps, with a little jealousy at his worldly success, in Johnson's treatment of his old pupil, and the mischievous, impish outlook, mingled with awe, of the small boy towards his master in Garrick's attitude to Johnson.

So far as worldly goods were concerned, they started about even, though the odds are said to have been slightly in favour of Johnson, who, according to Boswell, "had twopence-halfpenny in his pocket to Davy's three-ha'pence." The actual truth of the story is conjectural, and by many it is thought that Johnson, in relating it, was either merely speaking in metaphors or taking a rise out of the ebullient David. Certain it is that the two men, when they arrived in London, had to have recourse to borrowing upon their joint note, to the tune of five pounds, from a Mr. Wilcox, a bookseller, who, it is satisfactory to know, was promptly repaid!

Was this the precursor of another of Davy's reforms?

It was originally intended that upon his arrival in town David should put himself under the tuition of a certain Mr. Colson, a parson of Rochester, but finances would not admit of such a thing, though they did not prevent him entering himself as a law student of Lincoln's Inn. For this privilege he paid a little over three guineas. He then set about to look around him, see the sights of the town, and generally enjoy himself before settling down to regular work. It may be presumed that he did this with exceptional success, for though his purse was light, his heart was lighter, and just as Johnson said of his death in later years that it eclipsed the gaiety of nations, so his advent in London may unconsciously have given them a fillip. But things were not to last like this, and well for Garrick that it was so. He had scarcely been a month in town when his father died. The worthy captain left a fairly substantial sum of money for those days to all his children, excepting David, to whom he left a shilling. But it was not the proverbial shilling. Davy was not cut off. His rich uncle from Lisbon, the wine merchant, had come to town, and presented his nephew with one thousand pounds, perhaps in compensation for the breach caused in his education by the abortive visit to Lisbon. So now Davy was his own master, and there was apparently nothing to prevent him doing what he liked and going where he liked; and what he liked was already in the offing, namely the stage.

But it is not only still waters that run deep, and the anything but still Davy formed a decision infinitely to his credit. His gentle mother was still living at Lichfield, bowed under the grief of her husband's death. To her, who had been parted from him for so long, it must have been a second death, and the warm-hearted Davy rather than add another little pain to a life that had probably been mainly composed of them, forewent his heart's desire, and put himself under the care of Mr. Colson, a step which he was wont to say, in after-life, was the making of him as an actor. This was probably true, for had he gone on the stage at that impressionable period he might have imbibed all those theatrical tricks and artifices he was afterwards so well able to reject. The very act by which he must have felt he was removing himself still further from his heart's desire seems to have been the short road to success.

Mr. Colson exercised only a negative influence on his charge's future career, though it is more than probable that he furnished him with much useful copy, turned to good account in later years. He was a character of a type that is not uncommon on the stage, and which appeals alike to actors and dramatic authors. A philosophic absent-minded recluse, who would regard an earthquake, were he in one, as so much scientific capital.

What David thought of Mr. Colson is known, but what Mr. Colson thought of David no one ever knew.

Rochester was a sleepy old town, but it may quite well have had a rude, if perhaps pleasant awakening, when David Garrick arrived on the scenes, for he at once set about organizing private theatricals and entertainments, making the most of his opportunities and educating himself in the best possible way. The wine he had to sell was too new to be put into the old bottles of the drama in the state it then was, and perhaps these little amateur excursions were, under the circumstances, a better training ground than the lower rungs of the professional ladder would have been. In any case, the apprenticeship did not last long, for in less than a year Garrick was back at Lichfield and discussing plans as to his future career with his brother Peter.

Peter having left the Navy, was on the same tack, and it was decided that the two brothers should pool their little capital and set up in business as wine merchants. Peter was to reside in Lichfield and look after the country branch, David—the expert!—was to represent the firm in London.

The London offices were set up in the Adelphi, in a place called Durham Yard, now no longer in existence, and David at once set about to establish his connexion. In what direction he looked may easily be imagined, and not many weeks had passed ere the firm had probably quite an extensive connexion amongst the actors and gay Bohemians who, then as now, frequented that part of the town. But such a connexion was probably more numerous than remunerative, and though Garrick was undoubtedly an ideal butterfly, he himself was probably the attraction, rather than what he represented. And that he did most of the settling is more than likely!

A business talk with Davy must have been an extremely diverting entertainment.

About this time he formed a warm friendship, afterwards to be severed, with an Irish actor whose native name of M'Laughlin has since become famous as Macklin. David and this queer fish had many things in common, visiting the play together frequently, and uniting in mutual disapproval against the artificial methods then in vogue. This companionship and many others with lesser luminaries compensated David in some manner for the dull routine of business, though, to be sure, there does not seem to have been very much of that done by the firm. Even David's dour friend Sam Johnson seems to have caught a little of his gay spirits, and sympathized with his aims, for he was presently instrumental in introducing Garrick to Mr. Cave, the publisher of *The Gentleman's Magazine*, at whose house a performance of Fielding's "*Mock Doctor*" was given. History does not relate whether it was so, but probably the choice of this play was Garrick's, and that just as in youthful years he may have chosen the "*Recruiting Officer*" from an inside knowledge of his subject, so the "*Mock Doctor*" may have been suggested to his mind by Doctors Kennedy and Barrowby, two curious characters whom he then knew, whose failure as physicians was only equalled by their success as spongers. This play was memorable for another reason, in that Garrick wrote an epilogue for it, the first of a long series.

Just about this time Garrick's gentle mother followed her husband to the grave, and, the last barrier being removed, he began seriously to set his face in the direction where his treasure had always lain.

Nature plays her game well. As if all this were not sufficient to lure David to the stage, she now played her strongest card and clinched the matter.

In 1740 Peg Woffington shot like a comet on to the theatrical firmament, and in that comet's tail there was no more attached satellite than David Garrick. He at once fell head over ears in love with her, and it is interesting to note that even when in the worst throes of that serious complaint his artistic judgment never deserted him. Peg's pertness, impudence and sauciness captivated many admirers, who would throng to see and acclaim her, especially in men's parts, notably *Sir Harry Wildair*, but Garrick, who perceived the genuine dramatic *flair* beneath the impudent exterior, would have nothing to say to such exhibitions. Sensible as he was of the charms of his lovely Peggy, which inspired him to the one piece of genuine poetry he wrote, he was not entirely taken in by them, and his affection was based on something more than mere infatuation.

Thus was Garrick's future fate sealed, and in 1741 we find him making tentative appearances as *Harlequin* in a pantomime produced under the plucky management of Giffard, at his law-defying little theatre in Goodman's Fields.

Yates, who should have played the part, was one night indisposed, and Garrick, who was a friend of Giffard and evidently had the run of the theatre, went on for the part unbeknown to anyone but himself and his manager.

Thus his first professional appearance was made anonymously. His next one was made under a *nom de théâtre* of Lyddal. Acting under Giffard's sane advice and auspices, he had a trial run in the provinces, and appeared at Ipswich in the character of *Aboan* in "*Oroonoko*." This was followed by *Chamont* in the "*Orphan*," in which it is stated that he showed his independence and originality, and hinted at his future policy by discarding the customary pigments then practically amounting to a mask.

Chamont was followed by *Sir Harry Wildair*, in which one can imagine he had received many hints from his "lovely Peggy." The little season concluded with the "*Recruiting Officer*," in which he played *Captain Brazen*, a larger part than that of *Sergeant Kite*, played years before at Lichfield. The Ipswich experiment was a great success, and indeed the whole trend of the little programme and the plays chosen seem to indicate the fact that "Davy" had already begun to have his own way.

He pursued that way very determinedly too, and as soon as he got back to London, set to work to try and reap the fruits of that success. His first efforts did not meet with much success, and the reason seems fairly obvious. He tried to reap where he had not sown, and applied to the two principal theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane. Neither of the managers would have anything to say to him, and to add to his trials, his brother Peter chose this bad moment to pay a business visit to the Metropolis, and what with one thing and another, poor David became quite ill. The illness gave him time to think, and it is not unlikely that some of his best medicine took the form of humble pie.

Back to Goodman's Fields, and his old manager whom he ought never to have left, went David, and on 19th October, 1741, appeared under his own name as *Richard III*, introduced like many an actor, before and since, under a "showman's lie." He was announced as a "gentleman who had never before appeared on any stage." The specious manager probably got round it by saying that of a truth *David Garrick* never had done so! One wonders whether such an announcement acted as a bait or a bar!

But there was no doubt about David's success, which was instantaneous and astounding. All the town flocked to see him. Goodman's Fields became the fashionable theatre, and Giffard reaped a handsome reward for his foresight. One of the most significant tributes that could possibly be paid to Garrick's acting lies in the fact that his praises were begrudgingly admitted even by those who had most reason to fear him. It was obvious that here was not only a great actor, but a great reformer; and Quin and Cibber, the most representative actors of the then old school, had to admit that there was something in the young man. "We are all wrong, if this is right," said Quin. "I' faith, Bracey, the lad is clever," said Cibber to Mrs. Bracegirdle. The great Pope was induced from his retirement to go and see the new wonder, and remarked that the young man never had an equal and would never have a rival!

Garrick's stage career had now begun in real earnest. His bid for popular favour had started under the most auspicious circumstances. But there was a crumpled rose leaf—one which was to take time, trouble and tears to straighten out. Brother Peter had to be told. And here Garrick, not relying on himself alone, had laid prudent plans. Present at the first night of "*Richard*" was one Dr. Swinfen, a family friend of the Garricks, who was now called in to assist in administering what was probably the most bitter pill that had ever left his dispensary.

Peter Garrick received two letters, one from his old friend and physician and the other from his brother. Both contained the startling news that Davy was now a "rogue and a vagabond." Dr. Swinfen's share of the pill was gilt with a most lavish and alluring description of the first-night raptures and applause, David's with genuine gold. He drew a dazzling picture of the fortunes that were soon to be his, and contrasted it dramatically with the falling fortunes of the wine business. But even then was hope of better things, for some of his (David's) money would be found sticking to the wine measure. He would sell his share of the business to Peter, and, in fact, reading between the lines of the letter, there is no doubt about it but that David's secession is going to be the making of himself, the business, and his brother Peter! And so, in a measure, it undoubtedly was, but it was many a long day before brother Peter saw it in that light.

"*Richard III*" ran for seven nights, and has probably never been played before or since to more distinguished audiences. It was succeeded by some unimportant plays, in which Garrick played some unimportant parts. In "*Pamela*" he first "created" a part, *Jack Smatter.* Then an adaptation of his own, "*The Lying Valet*," was produced, in which he played *Sharp.* His "*Lethe*" was also produced, but from the fate that it has met with, seems not inaptly named. He fulfilled what seems to be an essential engagement in every actor's career by playing the *Ghost* in "*Hamlet*," and on 3rd February, 1742, made his second great "hit" in the part of *Bayes* in "*Rehearsal.*" This character was the very antithesis of *Richard*, and in it Garrick introduced his famous—considered by some infamous—imitations of his brother actors, and fired his lesser, but more destructive, battery at the old order. Cibber, Quin, Delane, and even his own manager Giffard, were all furious, but Garrick had the weight of public opinion on his side. Later, when in his calmer moments he was able to review the dead and wounded, and realized the havoc he had caused, he spiked his guns and ceased the "mimic" warfare. But scarcely had their splutter died away when the boom of another big gun was heard. On the 11th March he appeared as *King Lear*, afterwards to be his greatest triumph. According to Fitzgerald, it did not start very auspiciously, and was afterwards severely criticized by his candid friend Macklin. But Garrick, with the sound common sense that was characteristic of him, listened carefully to what his critics had to say, gradually improved his rendering until it was generally considered perfect, and even Macklin, who had become his bitter, almost malicious enemy, pronounced it a masterpiece.

But poor Giffard, who, though he must have reaped a handsome monetary benefit from his "find," now began to find the reverse of the medal. The success of the little theatre in Goodman's Fields had not unnaturally excited the jealousy and hatred of the patent theatres, Covent Garden and Drury Lane, whose audiences were now wending their way to Goodman's Fields. Sir John Barnard, a busybody, who evidently made it his business to keep the players in check, was called in to assist, the crushing machinery of the law was put to work, and the little theatre in Goodman's Fields had to close down. Its record is one that will be for ever honoured in the annals of the British stage. Giffard was an admirable manager. The plays were carefully, even lavishly mounted, and the success of this little out-of-the-way theatre seems to have had its counterpart in later times in that of the Bancroft régime at the old "Prince of Wales."

During its last season Garrick worked very hard. He played nineteen characters and appeared over a hundred and fifty times.

But behind the action of the patent theatres there was more than met the eye, and Fleetwood, of Drury Lane, succeeded in enrolling the new "star" under his banner at what was then a record salary of over £500 a year.

In the meantime what was going on at Lichfield? Had brother Peter thawed in the sunshine of these triumphs and rising pecuniary fortunes, in which you may be sure Davy kept him well posted? He certainly showed signs of relenting, and even taking an interest in the outlaw's career. But never on his own account. Oh dear, no! It was always for the sake of some one else. Mr. So-and-So went to see David but could not get a seat. Then, of course, although he himself was not the slightest bit interested in David's professional career, some of his brothers were, and on their behalf, if David could oblige with an "order," etc., etc., etc. ! !

David's patronage and purse were not to be despised, and probably no one will ever know to what extent and in how many different directions his enormous family of brothers and sisters, nephews and nieces, were indebted to their black sheep.

He had conquered London; he was now about to take Dublin by storm, and later on Paris, but it was not until after his death that Lichfield finally capitulated.

In the interim between the conclusion of his old engagement at Goodman's Fields and the commencement of his new one at Drury Lane, Garrick had accepted an offer to appear for a short season at the Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin, under the management of Duval.

Thither he went, accordingly, in the sprightly company of Peg Woffington and an Italian dancer, Barbarini. His fame had preceded him. Dublin was all agog to see him, and early in June he arrived. It was the height of the season in the Irish capital, and everybody who was anybody was there, excepting the Lord-Lieutenant, who is nobody, being for the time being somebody else! Unluckily he was some*where* else, too, at this time. Garrick made his first appearance on the 17th June in "*Richard III*" before an audience that was representative of all that was brilliant in that very brilliant capital. His success was immediate, and even exceeded expectations.

"Garrick fever," in some form or another, attacked the entire population, for whilst the rich were enjoying a surfeit of pleasure the poor groaned under a surplus of distress. An epidemic, said to be caused by overcrowded houses, was wittily dubbed and known for many years afterwards as Garrick fever.

So delighted was Garrick with his reception and so impressed by the intelligence and brilliance of his audience, that he determined to pay them the highest compliment in his power. He would submit to their judgment and critical appreciation, his first rendering of perhaps the greatest part in the greatest play that has yet been written.

On Thursday, 4th June, 1742, he appeared for his last, and lasting, benefit as *Hamlet*, supported by Peg Woffington as *Ophelia*.

The performance was received with tumultuous applause and considered a wonderful success, but Garrick was a reformer, and evoked much criticism. One of his reforms was to dispense with the traditional music accompaniment. It had hitherto been the custom for *Hamlet* to come on with a few bars of music. One wonders what bars they were!

Unfortunately at this time Dublin was not so well supplied with newspapers as it is now, and there is very little but oral tradition upon which to base an estimate of this first appearance as *Hamlet*.

The interest excited by his reading of the part was evidently sufficient to cause a public request that he should play it once more, which he did.

He made his last appearance for the season in Dublin on 19th August, when he played *Captain Plume* in the "*Recruiting Officer*," his first love, in which he had now played three parts.

That Garrick won all hearts behind as well as before the curtain in Dublin may be deduced from the fact that he left the capital on the 23rd August in the friendly company of Messrs. Cibber and Delane, rival attractions at "another place," whose season had been practically ruined by the "Garrick fever" in its pleasanter form! Pleasant stories are also told of his kindness and charity, and more than one of his less fortunate confrères had reason to bless the day he set foot in Ireland.

It is a pity that his gentle mother was not alive at this time to witness her son's triumph in her own native land. Had she been so, Lichfield must have capitulated.

The Drury Lane season commenced, as far as Garrick was concerned, on 5th October. He had not had much of a holiday, nor was he to have one for many a long day, for though the time was drawing nigh when he would be "out of the bill" for some considerable time, it was to be no holiday, but a long-drawn-out and bitter feud. In addition to all his old Goodman's Fields parts he played his Dublin ones, notably *Hamlet* and *Abel Drugger*. The latter was one of his most famous impersonations. He also "enacted" *Millamour* in the "*Wedding Day*" of Henry Fielding; and played his old friend Peg Woffington's part of *Sir Harry Wildair*, in which he failed, and not long after wisely dropped the part from his repertoire.

Meanwhile, at the other theatre, Quin, Cibber, and the rest of them were doing their best to shout the new-comer down, and keep up the dying embers of the old school. But it was all to no purpose. The public had opened the door to the repeated knocking of the younger generation, as it always does and always will do, and Quin and his associates were beaten. But Garrick did not have it all his own way. His reformations in the cause of art were widely acclaimed and immensely popular, but in the cause of business they were baulked at every turn. Fleetwood, the manager of Drury Lane, a well-connected man, formerly a wealthy dandy, had gone bankrupt. Bailiffs were in possession of the theatre, and salaries were not forthcoming. Garrick convened an assembly of actors to meet him at his house in King Street, Covent Garden, and sign an agreement to go on strike. This was done, and Garrick unfolded his other scheme, which was to use his patronage with the high and mighty to get the licence to open a new theatre. But the "high and mighty," in the person of the Lord Chamberlain, the Duke of Grafton, would have none of it, and considered Garrick's income of £500 a year ample, when his own son got less than half that for risking his life in the service of his country! Apparently the Duke waived the deputation away without waiting to hear what Garrick had to say anent his *not* getting the £500!

After this Garrick had another scheme, namely, that of taking a theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields, but it fell through. Negotiations continued, and a long and fierce fight ensued, the upshot of which was that Garrick finally came to terms and reappeared on 6th December in his famous old part of *Bayes*. But bloodless battles such as these are seldom fought without some casualties. In this case there was a severe one. Garrick's old friend Macklin was most seriously wounded by, as he imagined, Garrick's treatment of him. But a very careful examination of the ins and outs of the famous quarrel seems to reveal the fact that Macklin was mainly, if not wholly, to blame. Nor was the quarrel a merely business one, as it appeared on the surface. Macklin was an older man than Garrick. Before Garrick ever stepped on the stage Macklin had had years and years of experience. The fire of the reformer burned in his heart. He was conscious of very real powers within him that seemed for the moment to be kept down by the artificial superficialities of those around him. Along comes young Master Garrick; their views coincide, and they become fast friends, with, possibly, a certain amount of patronage on Macklin's side. Suddenly, at a single bound, his young companion outstrips him, and with apparent ease gets to the goal towards which he had been striving for years, and becomes the idol of the town, and is looked upon very favourably by Peg Woffington, a lady who has also Macklin's scalp at her belt.

Before the two old friends parted, rather than quarrel over the full share of Peg's affections, they decided to share them, and shortly before the quarrel at the theatre, the three, Peg, David, and Macklin, set up housekeeping together. The upshot of such a risky experiment can easily be guessed.

In the case of a duel, the aggressive party is generally the one that is in the wrong. In the case of a trio it is more often the one that is in the right. There is no doubt that Garrick's virtues got upon both his companions' nerves, or rather their vices. He was careful and thrifty, and in fact sensible, whereas Peg and Macklin were not only Bohemians of Bohemians, but also Irish, and members of the most thoughtless, improvident and happo-go-lucky profession there is. Garrick's extraordinary practicability and ability to realize his ideals, probably had the irritating effect that this eminently English characteristic so often has upon the Irish temperament, satisfied, as it seems to be, with dreams as such. Peg was the first to give out, and it is probable that neither Macklin nor Garrick were sorry, for her liberality and prodigality had let them in badly. She and David became estranged, though the final rift had not yet appeared.

With Macklin the quarrel was far more grave, and was never patched up, at least on his side. Whilst openly siding with David against Fleetwood, Macklin seems to have played a double game, and eventually fell between two stools. At any rate, when Garrick reappeared at Drury Lane on the 6th the pit was "packed" with Macklin and his disreputable friends; the public had already been prejudiced by means of a pamphlet circulated by Macklin, and Garrick was hissed off the stage. Next time he appeared the pit was "packed" with a number of prize-fighters, who drove out the Macklin clique.

In the end, the victory lay entirely with Garrick, whose popularity continued unimpaired, but Macklin continued to go from bad to worse, never losing an opportunity of back-biting and maligning Garrick, especially on the score of his stinginess, and this, too, at a time when he was not above appealing to Garrick's generosity.

In the forthcoming season of 1743–4 at Drury Lane, David played many new characters, the principal of which was *Macbeth*, in which, somewhat contrary to his later custom, he restored the original version to the stage. He also reappeared with Peg Woffington, now rapidly becoming his enemy, and the two delighted the town with their performances of "*Lord and Lady Townley*." Amongst the actors who appeared at Drury Lane at this time was Foote, whose principal object in life, evidently at Macklin's instigation, was making David's life a burden to him. His inclusion in the company, whence Garrick's influence could easily have excluded him, points again to David's amiability and desire to smooth things over with Macklin, for Foote was engaged from the Academy that Macklin had opened in the Haymarket. Business at the theatre was in a somewhat chaotic state; Fleetwood's time was drawing very near, he was shortly to be succeeded by Lacy; but it seems evident that Garrick's hand was really directing affairs, and the apparent chaos was only the old order giving place to the new. At Covent Garden, under the leadership of Quin, it was still making a gallant fight for life, Quin even essaying to appear on the same nights in the same characters as Garrick. But this only served to heighten the younger man's victory. Disheartened and disgusted, Quin sought pastures new in Dublin, but was there completely ousted by a young man called Sheridan, who came to London in the season 1744–5, appeared through the courtesy of Garrick at Drury Lane, and proved himself quite unfit to challenge comparison with "Roscius." During this season, Macklin, evidently through David's magnanimity, was received back into the theatre, and came with no very good grace.

On November the 7th there was a riot in the theatre owing to a change in the price of admission.

On March 7th David Garrick played "*Othello*" for the first time and did not make much of a success of it, though nothing he ever attempted could have been entirely a failure. His appearance and manner of dressing the part as seen in the picture at the Garrick Club were alike ridiculous.

Thomson's (of "*The Seasons*") "*Tancred and Sigismunda*" was brought out at the end of March. In it Garrick and Sheridan made a great joint success. In April Garrick was taken seriously ill and could not play for some time. Meanwhile the theatre passed from the hands of Fleetwood into those of Lacy, a young man who had hitherto been stage manager at Covent Garden, and who, by his punctiliousness and sobriety, had earned such a good reputation that wealthy patrons had sought him out and financed him. About this time came the final rupture with Peg Woffington. David, it appears, had long cherished ideals of marrying her, and had only been prevented doing so by her flightiness and capriciousness. Again and again he had forgiven her insults and infidelities, for she was by way of being engaged to him. But the young lady, at least she was no longer *very* young, now went too far. The scales fell from David's eyes and she was sent to the right-about.

Presents were returned, David, however, reserving as a keepsake a pair of handsome diamond buckles.

This little incident has served as a basis for most of the stories of meanness, etc., levelled against him, but it is more than probable that no such construction can legitimately be put upon it, and that the affection for the buckles was really the most genuine thing about them.

The most amusing things in the controversy to the outsider are the caustic verses with which David led up to the breach, surely an inversion of the usual order of such things.

As soon as, or almost before, Garrick was well again, Messrs. Cibber and Quin, not unwise in their generation, approached him with a view to jointly securing the lease of Drury Lane from Lacy, but he was not to be drawn, and soon afterwards left town for Bath. At Bath he received a curiously worded invitation from Thomas Sheridan to come and play again in Dublin, which he accepted for 24th November.

The success of this second visit to Dublin even eclipsed the first.

Garrick was fêted and courted everywhere. High and low paid him homage, with the one exception of Lord Chesterfield, then Lord-Lieutenant. But his Lordship's haughtiness affected Garrick's success about as little as it afterwards did that of Johnson's dictionary. Another of the fine traits in Garrick's character came very much into evidence in Dublin. Besides alternating many important parts with Sheridan (he played *Iago* to Sheridan's *Othello*), he proved a strong friendship for and was of substantial assistance to Spranger Barry, a gifted young actor who was appearing "at the other house" in Dublin and was afterwards destined to become one of Garrick's most dangerous rivals. There was also a young actress in the company, Miss Bellamy, who, believing she had received some slight at his hands, did all that lay in her power, which was pretty considerable, to ruin David's connexion with the fashionable Dublin public. In return Garrick appears never to have lost an opportunity of doing her a good turn, and as soon as he was in a position to do so, offered her a good London engagement at ten guineas a week. Other important new characters which he played on this visit were *Orestes* and *Faulconbridge*. He returned to London on 10th May, and his astute mind at once perceived that now was the time to watch the market and play his cards carefully. He led off by accepting an offer from Rich to play six performances at Covent Garden on sharing terms. The first of these was on 11th May, when he appeared as *Lear*. This was followed by *Richard*, *Othello*, *Archer* and *Macbeth*, and perhaps there were some fortunate enough to witness the great young actor in all six performances. The next season he continued to play at Covent Garden, being in many plays associated with

Quin, and interesting indeed must have been this conjunction of the old with the new school. The climax was reached on 14th November, when the pair appeared together in "*The Fair Penitent.*" Quin was *Horatio* and Garrick *Lothario.* Mrs. Cibber was leading lady and played *Calista.* When the two great actors stood on the stage together the applause was so deafening that they were unable to proceed with their parts. This applause was probably tainted with partisanship, and as like as not proved the battle-cry of two opposing camps. But Garrick's party probably roared the louder. At any rate the previous productions had proved that Quin's popularity was waning, whilst the younger man's was decidedly on the increase. Quin got his own back, to a small extent, later on in the season when "*Henry IV*" was revived. He played *Falstaff*, one of his greatest successes, and Garrick *Hotspur*, one of his failures. After five performances he had the sense to drop it and never played it again. Altogether this season was most interesting—epoch-breaking, as well as epoch-making in the history of the stage. Whether in bringing it about Garrick was actuated by sincere and kindly motives towards the old actor, or whether he was a subtle diplomatist, it is hard to say. He may have acted from mixed motives. But his never-failing generosity, not only to his rivals but also his enemies, incline one to the former belief. His sincere desire for the reformation and the advancement of his art, too, may have had its share in prompting him to take a step which would be well calculated to display the superiority of the new school. During this last season at Covent Garden, Garrick had been in constant communication with Lacy, who was finding the burden of Drury Lane too heavy for him. Garrick offered to relieve him of some of it, and by an agreement dated 9th April, 1747, became partner with him. The fact that he paid £8000 for his share is good evidence of his recent financial success. Thus it was that at the beginning of the season of 1747-8 David became joint manager of Drury Lane Theatre, and monarch of all he surveyed as far as the hinder side of the curtain was concerned. He was to have £800 a year as a manager, in addition to £500 as an actor, to say nothing of his profits as a business partner in the concern.

But it was not only on the stage that eventful things were happening. Garrick had seen and, like most of the town, been captivated by a very beautiful and attractive young German dancer. She had come to London in 1746, after an adventurous sea passage, in which she appears to have travelled as a boy, and appeared at the Haymarket. She was known as La Violetta, her full name being Eva Marie Violetta Veigel, but some mystery surrounds her birth, and there is some shadow of foundation for the story that she was closely connected with the Earl of Burlington. Lord Burlington certainly proved a parent in deed if not in fact, and the young lady was at once taken under the protection of the Burlingtons until her marriage to Garrick, when a large sum of money was settled on her.

Although it was three years before the courtship was consummated, there is no doubt that it commenced about this time, and Garrick entered upon this new stage in his career under the happiest possible auguries.

The season opened under brilliant auspices on 15th September, and it is interesting to notice that all

Garrick's old friends, in spite of estrangements and frictions, played important parts in the proceedings. Sam Johnson *very* rightly supplied the prologue. And a finer prologue has never been written. It contained the famous and much-quoted line:

"Those who live to please, must please to live."

It was magnificently spoken by Garrick, who did not appear in the play, which was the "*Merchant of Venice*," Macklin appearing as *Shylock*, and by playing the character seriously indicated to the audience that reforms were proceeding behind as well as in front of the curtain. The latter were hinted at by a line on the programme setting forth the fact that members of the audience were no longer allowed on the stage or behind the scenes.

The epilogue was written by Garrick himself and spoken by Peg Woffington.

The whole performance was a truly memorable one, and besides stamping David as a great and self-effacing artist and reformer, forms a valuable link in the chain of circumstantial evidence which proves him to have been a generous and forgiving character, one who remembered his friends long after they had become his enemies.

Thus brilliantly inaugurated was Garrick's first season as joint manager of Drury Lane, and it marked the commencement of a long and brilliant régime, which lasted the best part of his career, and during which he raised himself to the highest pinnacle in not only the artistic but also the social life of his day, and in doing so elevated the status of his whole profession. The stigma of "rogue and vagabond" began to be forgotten, though later on the vitriolic pen of "Junius" tried to galvanize it into life.

But all was not beer and skittles, and from the very commencement the rose-bush was infested with thorns, the sharpest of which were, as is so often the case, the leading ladies. Matters having been settled more or less amicably between them, there was still a certain amount of irritation, owing principally to other ladies of the company considering themselves the object of his private affections. But all this time his true love for the Violetta was pursuing a steady, though not by any means even course, and ultimately led up to two altars, that of the church in Russell Street, Bloomsbury, and the chapel of the Portuguese Embassy. The marriage was a very brilliant ceremony, patronized by the highest in the land, and treated with much dignity by the newspapers.

The famous love comedy of "*David Garrick*," formerly associated so closely with Sothern and now with Sir Charles Wyndham, seems to have had some foundation in fact, and David's histrionic abilities were put to many a severe test in evading the close surveillance of the antagonistic Lady Burlington. Moreover, there is good evidence that he more than once proved himself quite capable of the noble self-sacrifice attributed to him in the famous comedy.

David's married life was to prove very happy. During the thirty years it lasted he and his wife are said never to have spent a whole day apart. Mrs. Garrick survived her husband by forty-two years, being buried beside him at the ripe old age of ninety-nine, and loving nothing better to the very last than to talk of her "dear Davy."

To give more than a mere chronological list of all the notable events in Garrick's eventful life would take up too much time and space, so I shall just touch on what seem to be the principal landmarks in his life before and behind the curtain.

His first season at Drury Lane was marked by the brilliant opening night already described. Soon after that he fell ill, and his own personal appearance as an actor was delayed until 15th October, when he appeared as *Archer*. His other notable "creations" that season were *Chorus* in "*Henry V*," *Jaffer* in "*Venice Preserved*," and by his consummate ability he made the small part of *Young Belmont* in "*The Foundling*" stand out as an important one.

The next season, though it was marked by the desertion of the lively Peg Woffington, who went over to Covent Garden, probably in a huff at Garrick's forthcoming marriage, and also at the presence in his company of a young and formidable rival, Mistress Kitty Clive, Drury Lane was further reinforced by the advent of Woodward, a really fine actor, who, with Barry, opened the season; but the great event was on 14th November, when Garrick appeared for the first time as *Benedick* to the *Beatrice* of Mrs. Pritchard. It is hard to imagine anyone more perfectly suited to the portrayal of such a character than the graceful Garrick. Mrs. Pritchard's *Beatrice* was on the same level, and the two gave a combined performance that has probably never been surpassed. On the 29th November Garrick produced his own version of "*Romeo and Juliet*," adding as much rubbish to it as removed from "*Macbeth*." There are those, amongst whom is Fitzgerald, who contend that Garrick's additions are by no means contemptible, and it is hard to believe that a man showing such consummate judgment as he had done in all matters connected with his art should have been quite so perfidious as some aver. Many of his interpolations have real dramatic value. Had the great dramatist and the great actor and producer been able to consult together, it is quite possible that the former might have fallen in with some of the latter's views. At any rate, Garrick's conceit was not unmingled with courage.

The next event in his life was the production of his old friend Johnson's "*Irene*." It was produced under the title of "*Mahomet and Irene*"; Garrick played the part of *Demetrius*, and there is no doubt at all that it was poor, heavy stuff which would never have succeeded at any time or in any place, and was only produced through Garrick's good nature. But Johnson was furious at its frigid reception, and to the last nursed a grievance against Garrick on account of it, but "*Irene*" gained for its author all the applause its merits deserved and a great deal more money. After this came Garrick's marriage, already described. The young couple settled down in a house in Southampton Street, Strand.

Simultaneously with the commencement of domestic and private bliss, began Garrick's public troubles. The little pin-pricks of envy, hatred, and malice assailed him on all sides. At the Bedford Tavern in Covent Garden the little coterie of jealous wits, headed by Foote and Dr. Fitzpatrick, would assemble and hatch their little schemes for tormenting the life of the successful but sensitive manager. That Garrick felt the sting of their darts very deeply there is no doubt, and the fact that he did do so may be evidence that their arrows were poisoned with a certain amount of unpleasant truth, but his invariably dignified actions and repeated magnanimity to the jackals whenever occasion offered, invariably gave the victory to his better self. Moreover, in a battle of wits he was a fine fighter, and though he never hit below the belt, he seldom failed to pink his adversaries.

But the little worries outside the theatre were not to be compared to those within. The manager was constantly assailed by a little stream of jealousies, intrigues, and petty spites, but the fact that practically no important dismissals or changes were made at his instigation, proves his amiability. Barry broke his articles and went over to the rival house at Covent Garden. Miss Bellamy, who owed everything to Garrick's teaching and unwearied patience, never hesitated to repay him by making mischief whenever and wherever possible. Covent Garden was being run deliberately in opposition to Drury Lane, and its object seems to have been the purely personal one of dethroning Garrick. In their hostility to him the company at that theatre had one thing in common. Jealousy was common to all and assumed its usual hydra-headed form. Quin was jealous and afraid of the younger generation. Macklin had had the mortification of seeing what he may have regarded as his own prerogative taken away and given to another, undoubtedly more single-minded than himself. Barry, whose jealousy seems to have been of a very elementary kind, was furious at being unable to reach the heights of a man whom perhaps the dream of his life had been to surpass. Peg Woffington—"Hell has no fury like a woman scorned"—and Mrs. Cibber, the outraged tragedy queen, unable to bring herself to face the fact that there were others! This lively party thought out the best they could do and produced "*Romeo and Juliet.*" The bait drew; Garrick produced the same play on 26th September, 1750, the date at which this volume really opens, and for nearly a fortnight the duel continued, Garrick finally and with that rare critical ability that always enabled him to perceive his own limitations, throwing down his sword. His non-success in the part was no sign of incompetence as an actor; rather the reverse, for *Romeo* is a part that demands a certain appearance and personality that could scarcely be expected from an actor who could play *Lear* and *Bayes* and *Richard III*. When all is said and done, old Simon Ingot's pithy summing-up of the situation in the comedy of "*David Garrick*"—"A couple of young fools running up and down a rope ladder all night, when they ought to have been safely in bed"—is not without its points. However, the town soon got sick of the fight, voicing its opinion in the usual manner by means of epigrams and squibs. As a matter of fact, Garrick was not at all bad as *Romeo*. Miss Bellamy, who played *Juliet* to Garrick's and Barry's *Romeo*, said that she felt she must get down from the balcony and run to Barry, but she was afraid that Garrick would get up on the balcony and rush at her!

To contrast what one can do with what another cannot is a dangerous game. He who laughs last laughs best, and Garrick was soon to prove his vast superiority as an actor and a manager. He soon equalled, if not beat, the manager of Covent Garden on his own ground by producing an extremely successful pantomime, a thing that thenceforward became an annual event at Drury Lane. The next play of any importance that he produced was Ben Jonson's "*Every Man in His Humour*," playing the part of *Kitely*, and doing a little editing on his own.

With all the attendant troubles and worries of such a busy life, it can be imagined that the little panelled sitting-room behind the parlour in Southampton Street, where Garrick and his little wife had their cosy little teas and chats, was a quiet oasis to which the great actor was glad to repair. Here, perhaps, they hatched the scheme for the pleasant, though belated, little honeymoon that was now to come. Together they set off for Paris, a very uneventful little visit compared to the next that David was to make. But Garrick was presented to the King, Louis XV, and if Fitzgerald is to be believed, the visit was not without its romance, for he tells us of a story in which Garrick, by means of his art, was instrumental in bringing about the arrest of a murderer. A friend and travelling companion of the actor's, one Sir George Lewis, was murdered in a forest. The affair was dismissed lightly by the police and treated as the work of robbers. But Garrick thought otherwise, and his suspicions falling on a certain Italian Count, he caused that gentleman to be conveyed to Lewis's hotel. There, to his horror, the accused was confronted with his victim, not, after all, dead, but with just sufficient strength to tax him with his crime. The Count fell on his knees and confessed; after which, Garrick, satisfied with his "returns," removed his make-up.

Possibly this visit to France prompted the next dramatic event of his life, which took place a few years later when he produced at Drury Lane his famous spectacle the "*Chinese Festival.*" It was by one Noverre, a Swiss, whom the public preferred to think a Frenchman, and was a dreadful fiasco. It was produced at a most unfortunate time; war had begun and anything French was as unpopular as it could well be. Garrick, hitherto the idol of the public, learnt what it meant to be their victim.

The theatre was wrecked, and the mob even marched to his private house, where they broke his windows and did much other damage. The spectacle was consequently withdrawn, and made way for a very much more dignified one; for a few days later when Garrick reappeared as *Archer*, the audience had the impertinence to call upon him to apologize, whereupon with all the splendid dignity at his command he informed them that he was above want and superior to insult, adding that unless they let him proceed with his part unmolested he would never appear upon that or any other stage again. The effect was electrical. The audience rose *en masse*, cheered him to the echo, and the great actor achieved one of the most notable triumphs of his life.

Meantime Barry had returned to Covent Garden, and the famous duel between the two houses began again, but this time Barry got very much the worst of it, for he was foolish and ill-advised enough to choose as his weapon "*King Lear*," perhaps Garrick's most famous part.

There is no doubt at all that the silver-voiced Barry made something out of "*King Lear*," but the difference between their two performances is very aptly summed up in two famous quatrains which appeared in the papers of the time :—

I

"The town has found out different ways
To praise the rival Lears,
To Barry they give loud huzzas,
To Garrick only tears."

II

"A king—nay, every inch a king,
Such Barry doth appear;
But Garrick's quite a different thing,
He's every inch King Lear."

But Covent Garden was on the verge of losing one of its most famous "draws," and Garrick one of his most implacable enemies. In May, 1757, Peg Woffington was taken ill at the theatre during the farewell speech of *Rosalind*, and removed to her home at Teddington, where she remained an invalid, and died two or three years later. To the last David Garrick was unremitting in his kindness and attention to his old love, nor is it surprising, for, after all, *the* great bond in their attraction was not their personal admiration for each other, founded upon the radiant attractions with which both were gifted, but their genuine love for their art, proved by their unremitting toil in its service. Of Peg it may truly be said that with all her caprices and flirtations, she never flirted and never capriced with her public.

The next six years, from 1757–1763, were to be very eventful ones in Garrick's life before and behind the curtain. Woodward had left him to go to Ireland, and Garrick had engaged as counter attractions Foote and Tate Wilkinson. The former, a scurrilous rogue, but an admirable comedian and mimic, was to prove the sharpest thorn in Garrick's side for the rest of his life.

Garrick suffered many pin-pricks from those who knew his sensitiveness, but no one annoyed him more than Foote, to whom Tate Wilkinson, a clever and impish mimic, proved a useful coadjutor. Garrick's magnanimity is again shown in his admitting these two wretches, who had already both shown their teeth, into his theatre. But they did not remain there long.

In 1759 "*High Life Below Stairs*"—a farce that still retains its popularity—was produced for the first time, and in 1760 Garrick engaged Sheridan, the reception of whose efforts at reform in Dublin had foreshadowed that of Garrick's at Drury Lane. In engaging Sheridan Garrick had sunk some perfectly justifiable differences, and the terms of the contract show that he behaved with more than fairness and justice. They began their venture with a revival of "*King John*," in which Garrick played *Faulconbridge* to the *King Henry* of Sheridan. But the outcome of the performance was a little unfortunate. The King came to see it twice, and on each occasion officially noticed the playing of Sheridan, and equally officially ignored that of Garrick. The play was almost immediately afterwards withdrawn. Many aver that the withdrawal was owing to Garrick's jealousy, but if so he made ample amends in 1763, when he produced Mrs. Sheridan's comedy "*Discovery*," and in it created the character of *Sir Anthony Branville.*

In November, 1761, he produced "*Cymbeline*," with so many alterations that the play was looked upon by many as being by him!

On the 25th January, 1763, he had to face what was perhaps the stormiest time in his somewhat stormy theatrical career. It was caused by the institution of a certain reform that had long been in his mind. It was the custom in those days, especially on benefit nights, for a sort of lesser auditorium to be erected on the stage itself, in which sat many of the personal friends of the actors, author, and so on, encumbering the stage and rendering it impossible for performers to make their exits and entrances properly. There is a story of a performer whose hat fell off when playing *Hamlet*, and was replaced by an ardent lady sitting on the stage, at quite the wrong angle for the "Moody

Dane"! Garrick was determined to put a stop to this sort of thing, and entirely abolished the practice of strangers being admitted on to the stage during a performance. Theatrical reforms are generally attended by a riot, and this was no exception to the rule. A section of the public, mainly composed of those who had a private grudge against Garrick, and headed by Dr. Fitzpatrick, raised a riot in the theatre, which Garrick was not so fortunate in quelling as in 1755.

The riot was repeated the following night, and the audience began to bully and demand that certain members of the company should come before them and apologize on their knees.

This was met in the case of one Moody, whose presence of mind had prevented one of the rioters from setting light to the theatre, by a flat refusal, the pluck of which delighted Garrick. The rioters then essayed to conceal their partiality under a cloak of impartiality, and went on to play the same games at Covent Garden, but Beard of that house was made of sterner stuff than the terrified little Davy, and they ended by finding themselves in the presence of Chief Justice Mansfield. Fitzpatrick got a severe talking to, and a bad fright when it was pointed out to him that had any deaths ensued as a result of the riot he would have been held responsible.

Fitzpatrick's discomfiture was complete and the reform had come to stay. Garrick, too, had other compensations. Perhaps the greatest of them all occurred in 1762, just previous to the riot. In that year Churchill published his famous "Rosciad." This was an elaborate criticism in the form of a poem, in which all the famous actors of the day were paraded before Shakespeare, who finally awarded the palm in really noble words to Garrick.

> "Garrick, take the chair—
> Nor quit it till thou place an equal there:"

The whole thing was as fine a piece of criticism of its kind as has been penned, and leaves no doubt that Garrick was head and shoulders above any of his contemporaries. But his attitude on the appearance of the poem was characteristically unwise. Although, of course, really hugely delighted, he affected to be indifferent and even hinted that Churchill had written the "Rosciad" in hopes of being put on the free list of the theatre. There were those that took good care his remarks should reach the formidable critic's ears, and Churchill afterwards attempted to undo the good he had done in another poem, but without much success. The fact is "The Rosciad" put Garrick into a somewhat unfortunate position, for to admit the truth and justice of the criticism regarding himself amounted to endorsing that of his colleagues! His whole attitude is, however, quite understandable. We all know the individual who is politely bored with a newly conferred dignity. However, what with all the rows, pamphlets and one thing and another the public are getting a little sick of Davy. Wherever he is the little man seems to be the centre of a disturbance of some sort, due quite as much to his virtues as to his vices. The houses are falling off at Drury Lane, and it is whispered that one night the receipts only amounted to £5! And now Garrick's wonderful wisdom, where his art was concerned, began to show itself. He determined to withdraw from the stage for a while, to see for himself and let his audiences see how they could get on without him. His wife, too, is not in the best of health, and needs a holiday. They will go on a little continental tour together, but first of all there is an invitation to stay with a Duke, a thing Davy never could resist; so off they go to Chatsworth, where they stay a week with the Duke of Devonshire. David is quite in his element, cutting no end of a dash amongst the ladies, making great way with his fine eyes and neat little epigrams and verses. Quin, too, is of the party. The temporarily and permanently deposed monarchs are now bosom friends. Mrs. Garrick is, indeed, so partial to Quin as to cause her husband to feign openly the jealousy he felt secretly.

Drury Lane reopened on the 15th of September, and it must have been with curiously mixed feelings that Garrick, his wife and family—a dog!—set off the same night on the Grand Tour! which in those days meant the Continent.

The "Grand Tour" was a triumphal progress, beginning and ending with Paris. During it the Garricks visited Lyons, Venice, Naples, Rome, Munich.

Paris at the time of his arrival was suffering from acute Anglomania, or, as we should call it nowadays, *entente cordiale*, and if one personality in the world was calculated above all others to accentuate the disease Garrick's was that one. He was *persona grata* at the exclusive dinners of Baron d'Holbach. He was given the freedom of the Comédie Française, whose bright particular star was Clairon. To that wayward genius Garrick became deeply attached and the true friend that he had proved himself to so many. Indeed their correspondence was never impaired, and from her death-bed she wrote to David, who was one of the few friends that never deserted her. At her instigation he performed extracts from some of his principal characters to a distinguished company, amongst whom was Marmontel, who is said to have been haunted for the remainder of his days by the great actor's rendering of the dagger-scene from "*Macbeth*." Another terrible performance was that of a poor man who had lost his wits from the shock occasioned by accidentally letting his own child fall from a window.

The friendships that Garrick made were not only with those of his own profession. Littérateurs, encyclopædists, artists, ambassadors, all vied to do him honour, and all proved his marvellous attraction by flocking round him like moths round a candle.

From Paris they went, via Lyons and Mount Cenis, to Turin, and thence to the principal cities of Italy. Nor would Garrick break his journey through France in response to an invitation to Ferney from the great Voltaire. The great little actor aspired thus to express his opinions of the French demigod's disapproval of Shakespeare.

At Venice he considered the stuffy little merchants to be seen on the Rialto were not to be compared to the magnificent ones on view at Drury Lane. With Rome the modern Roscius was of course profoundly impressed. He was naturally elated at being in the city of the great Roscius, and perhaps considered the city itself should be not a little elated at the presence of his modern prototype, but he was, nevertheless, genuinely moved by the remains of massive grandeur and greatness. The Colosseum far exceeded even his imagination. At Naples he was the idol of the aristocratic English colony, and made the acquaintance of Sir William Hamilton ; perhaps it was as well that his lady was not yet on the scenes, at any rate of the Villa

Hamilton. At Parma he dined with, and declaimed Shakespeare to, the Grand Duke—who presented him with a snuff-box—and a very distinguished company. At Venice Mrs. Garrick's sciatica became so bad that she had to have recourse to the mud-baths at Abano, near Padua. Whether David actually visited Padua and formed any conclusion as to how Antonio's ships got there history does not relate, nor did the next performances at Drury Lane furnish any clue.

The mud-baths had an immediate effect; Mrs. Garrick was soon quite well again, and the pair proceeded to Munich, where it was David's turn to be laid by the heels. For a month he really was most desperately ill, and has himself furnished whimsical descriptions of his appearance. He even went so far as to write his own epitaph. A very much better one, by the way, than that which now disgraces his monument in Westminster Abbey. This illness was a forerunner of that which eventually carried him off. But happily the "gaiety of nations" was not yet to be eclipsed.

Spa did for him what Abano had done for his wife, and he returned to Paris, to be welcomed even more rapturously than before.

Hundreds of anecdotes are circulated about this visit to Paris, amongst which the most significant, to an actor, is that of his having, in company with Préville, the foremost French comedian of the day, called forth the interest and ridicule of a whole village, by their simulation of drunkenness.

When they were out of sight of the village and Préville invited criticism, Garrick remarked that, admirable though the French actor's performance was, his legs were not drunk; a good indication that Garrick possessed that genius which is an "infinite capacity for taking pains." But various strings were now beginning to pull Garrick homeward, not the least of which was the success of Powell, a young actor whom he had chosen to play important parts in his absence. The town was "horn-mad" after this young man, and there were many busybodies who lost no time in letting the older one know it. But galling though it may have been in some ways, Powell's success justified Garrick's judgment. And this and many other instances go far to prove how unfounded was the assertion that Garrick could not recognize merit in another. Whatever his baser feelings may have been, he watched over this young man with fatherly care, afterwards to be repaid by the basest ingratitude. His letters of advice to the young actor are full of wisdom, pride in his calling, and strong common sense.

So Garrick determined to hurry home, and before doing so prepared the ground in a characteristically tricky and silly fashion—the outcome of his usual thin-skinnedness and terror of pin-pricks. He wrote a foolish satire about himself, entitled the "Sick Monkey," which is just about what he was. A lot of fuss was made over keeping the authorship a secret, but the fact was, no one cared a pin who wrote it, and fortunately for Garrick it missed fire.

He returned home on the 27th of April, 1765, and obliterated, as far as literature was concerned, all traces of "The Sick Monkey" by the exquisite epitaph on his friend Hogarth, who had died during his absence. The epitaph is still to be seen on the poet's grave in Chiswick Churchyard. It illustrates well Garrick's happy touch in these matters, and helps to show the many-sided man he was.

He, very wisely, did not reappear on the stage immediately on his return to England, but let the general desire for his reappearance increase until it culminated in what amounted to a "command" from the King. Then on the 14th of November, 1765, he reappeared in "*Much Ado About Nothing*," playing *Benedick* to the *Beatrice* of Miss Pope. His appearance was the occasion of a roar of welcome such as had very likely never before been heard in a theatre. When it was seen from his very first movements that none of the old grace and ease had deserted him, the audience became frantic with delight, and as he came forward and spoke a prologue written by himself, he re-established himself in the hearts of his audience, never again to be divorced. Though the prologue was not in the best of taste, the concluding lines "'Tis for my King! and zounds! I'll do my best," spoken up to the King in his box, struck a very happy note.

Then Garrick settled down seriously to playing *Benedick*, and as the play proceeded the audience's delight knew no bounds. Far from having become rusty, their idol had improved, his continental tour, his association with French actors and acting, his intercourse with the great distinguished and cultured folk of many nations, had had their effect upon his sensitive, photographic mind. He had improved in elegance and style, he was more at ease, less anxious for applause, less self-conscious, and more in command of the situation. Probably, too, time was bringing its compensations. Stories of his meanness may have been not a little dispelled by his public acts, the lavishness with which he ran his theatre, and the care which he bestowed upon the comforts of his audience! He had recently inaugurated another improvement, that of lighting his stage with invisible lights. All these little things tell in the long run, and audiences were beginning to find out that their little Davy was a great man in his somewhat fussy way. And David knew it. Henceforth we find him treading with surer and firmer step, and not cringing quite so much to those whose ridicule he feared.

The re-entry of Garrick into Drury Lane saw the revival of the old Govent Garden rivalry. In his absence Covent Garden had stolen a march upon him by establishing a fund for decayed actors. Garrick resented this, feeling, with some justification, that he should have been consulted and the fund have embraced the whole profession. He promptly started a similar fund at Drury Lane. Its establishment and endowment were the work of years, and it is still in existence. The sum of Garrick's contributions amounted to upwards of five thousand pounds, and his last appearance was made for its benefit.

Garrick was now to lose one of his ablest lieutenants. In January, 1765, Mrs. Cibber died, and Garrick said: "Then Tragedy is dead on one side." Quin, the last of the classic "old guard," died too, in the same month. The fact that the two great actors of opposing schools, the one practically ousted by the other, had become firm friends, speaks volumes for the characters of both.

But once back at the theatre, his troubles began again, and his first quarrel of any note was with, as usual, a friend, the shallowness of whose nature was only equalled by the depths of his obligations. Colman and Garrick had collaborated over a farce to be called "*The Clandestine Marriage.*" How much of the play was written by Colman and how much by

Garrick has long been disputed. The rock that the two authors split on was the principal character, *Lord Ogleby*. Colman and Garrick both laid claim to having created it. Whichever it was Garrick most certainly declined to play it. He had made a resolution that he would appear in no new characters, and intended to abide by it. Colman, not without reason, felt himself injured and aggrieved by this. The character was played by King, who made his name in it. In later years Garrick often seems to have cast hankering looks back at it, and regretted that he never played it.

The coolness between the two men increased, and soon became an open breach. Colman, playing on the influence of a rich relative who afterwards disappointed him, managed to acquire the lease of Covent Garden. Powell, Garrick's new rival, had gone over to the enemy's camp, breaking his contract with David, and sacrificing a thousand pounds by doing so. The accession of more firmness into Garrick's character seems hinted at by this exaction. The rivalry of Covent Garden thus becoming serious, Garrick played a very clever counter move, by engaging Mr. and Mrs. Spranger Barry, and the two great actors again delighted the town by their joint appearances in their famous rôles, *Lear*, *Othello*, etc. Then thanks to Goldsmith's "*Good-Natured Man*," Covent Garden was again top-dog for a little while.

A feature of the 1768 season was the curiously successful production of a play called "*False Delicacy*," the work of an Irishman called Kelly, the success of which is one of those mysteries with which the stage abounds.

At the end of the season there was a command performance before the King of Denmark. Two very inferior plays, "*The Suspicious Husband*" and "*The Provoked Wife*," were given. Why they were chosen is difficult, or perhaps easy, to say, Garrick probably wishing to show his versatility by playing more than one part on the same evening. Unfortunately the custom of selecting inferior and scrappy programmes on these state occasions still seems to prevail. It is a pity, for no actor is quite at his best in a bad play.

On the other hand, Garrick may, perhaps, have taken a very fair measure of the intellectual attainments of this particular King. He found himself after the performance the possessor of a handsome gold snuff-box!

About this time Mrs. Pritchard, the greatest *Lady Macbeth* of her day, died. Garrick, who received the news from the uncouth Gainsborough, was profoundly touched. On the 24th April, 1769, he lost another of his staunchest supporters. Kitty Clive, his adorable Pivy, with whom he had wrangled and fought, corresponded and coquetted for many years, and of whom he was absolutely terrified, retired whilst still in the plenitude of her powers. Like the wise little lady she was, she had the sense to pay early heed to time's warnings, and did not wait to have them pointed out by others. It is probable that in her own impish, rollicking line of business she never had a superior, if an equal. The correspondence between her and David forms delightful reading. It is obvious that in spite of their continual bickering and quarrelling the two had the greatest affection and respect for one another, and it is more than likely her retirement had some effect upon Garrick's own plans in that direction. But before that happened, the great little man was to make one of the biggest mistakes of his life, and to cut a ridiculous figure in the eyes of his contemporaries, if not of posterity. In 1769 on the 6th, 8th, and 9th of September took place the famous Shakespeare Jubilee at Stratford-on-Avon. With the quaint little Warwickshire town as his stage and scenery, Garrick tried to produce an imposing pageant with Shakespeare as the *raison d'être*, and, it must be added, himself as the centre. But unfortunately, although he doubtless had under his control his stage and actors, the "flies" were not in his province, and, as if to rebuke him for his presumptuousness, down came the rain in torrents and spoilt everything. The whole business went off like a damp firework. Garrick lost an enormous sum of money and gave a handle to his pamphleteering pests, of which they were not slow to avail themselves. By reproducing the show later at Drury Lane he recouped himself to some extent, but it was many a long day before he ceased to be reminded of his foolishness in the way he most detested.

In 1771 he was unfortunate enough, or perhaps, in the spirit of a man who bragged that Dr. Busby had flogged his grandfather, fortunate enough, to incur the displeasure of the redoubtable Junius. It had come to his knowledge that Junius would write no more, and always delighted with the opportunity of being *persona grata* in high places he at once bustled off to inform the King. But the name of the "busy informer" came to Junius' ears, and the result was a terrible letter, short, but very much to the point, in which Garrick was sharply reminded of his official status of "Vagabond"! The terrified little man hastened to make his apologies, and the incident passed off without further trouble. But although this great blow was averted, numerous little pin-pricks were still jabbing him on all sides, at the hands of scurrilous, jealous pamphleteers, amongst whom the most notable were Kenrick, Bickerstaff, and Murphy. They generally started proceedings by sending the actor some rubbishy play, which he had not always the moral courage to refuse. Rejection or failure were alike credited to malignant machinations on Garrick's part, and were the signal for a long series of written attacks, generally culminating in abject begging letters written from some wretched attic in a continental town, whither the writer had fled, often with Garrick's assistance, to escape the rigour of the law.

He was now about to make the second great mistake of his career. His terrible "improved" version of "*Hamlet*" was produced on 18th of December, 1772. Thus for the second time in his life he gave a ready handle to his enemies, who were not slow to profit by it. One would have thought that the lesson of Stratford-on-Avon would have humiliated him sufficiently, and prevented him meddling with the immortal bard again. Perhaps he thought that on his own stage he was more sure of his feet than in the slippery fields of Stratford-on-Avon. At any rate he again brought anathemas down on his head, yet it is curious that, in spite of them, this version of "*Hamlet*" continued to be acted some years after his death. David's own prompt copy has not survived, but it would be very interesting to read it and try to discover some of his reasons for the alterations. Whilst in no way upholding or excusing such vandalism, it must be realized that Shakespeare wrote his plays for a theatre that was mechanically different from that of Garrick's time, and undoubtedly some concessions must be made to the altered conditions, and the method of presentation somewhat modified, as is done in our own day. As continual variety in this department seems inevitable and even advantageous, it may conceivably be the same with regard to the construction of the play itself, but some of Garrick's alterations were no doubt inexcusable.

This was the last event of any exceptional or striking interest in his career until the year 1776, when his memorable farewell season began. The great actor played a round of his favourite characters to houses the like of which have never been seen at Drury Lane before or since. Folk came from all parts of the country to avail themselves of their last opportunity of seeing him. Some of the most distinguished of them had to take their places with the ordinary crowd and wait for hours at the pit door, often to be turned away unsuccessful at the end. The performances began on the 11th April with *Abel Drugger*, and concluded on the 10th June with *Don Felix*, in "*The Wonder.*" It was originally intended that he should make his last appearance as he had his first, in the character of *Richard III*, but this was abandoned, probably on account of his state of health, which was delicate and not equal to the violent claims of Richard.

The last performance took place on the 10th June, 1776. It was a most melancholy occasion. More like a funeral than a theatrical entertainment, said some who were present. Now that the public were about to lose him they seemed to realize for the first time what the loss meant.

At the end of the play Garrick spoke an address, not in his accustomed easy, flowing style, but with many stoppages and breaks. At the close of it he retired up-stage, and the last that lingered in the memory of that grief-stricken audience were those wonderful eyes, twin stars stuck by nature in his head, as Colman had said, gazing their last wistful look over the "house."

The profits of the performance were given to the theatrical fund.

In his farewell, as in so many other things, Garrick took a more dignified line than is often the case with members of his profession. His farewell was a farewell, and he never again appeared upon the stage except to speak an occasional prologue or epilogue. He did not entirely sever his connection with Drury Lane, but would sometimes visit it and offer his advice, not always very well received, to the indolent and dissolute Sheridan.

He enjoyed the remaining years of his life paying country visits, and staying in the houses of the great and noble, a thing that was always a source of the greatest glee to him.

He made one more triumph. A spontaneous, unstage-managed effect, the story of which has often been told. He was present in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery of the House of Commons during a debate.

Being a privileged person he did not obey the summons "Strangers must withdraw" during a division. The next day a jealous, officious country member drew the attention of the House to the impropriety of having a rogue and vagabond listening to their debates. The mighty Burke was on his feet in a twinkling, delivering a fine panegyric on the great master of oratory who had taught them all. He was followed by Fox and many others, and a vast majority of the whole House put on record its sense of the distinction conferred upon it by the presence of such a distinguished stranger.

Not content with this magnificent tribute Garrick was ill-advised enough to pen some verses in which he compared the country member, one Squire Baldwin, to a braying jackass, which he undoubtedly was, but it would have been wiser to have let the ass's own bray proclaim his nature.

Not long after this incident Garrick was seized by a very bad attack of his old enemy, the stone, whilst staying with Lord Spencer at Althorp. He was removed by easy stages to Adelphi Terrace, where he lingered for some days and passed away on 20th January, 1779. He was buried in Westminster Abbey with great pomp and ceremony on the 1st of February. The funeral was a tremendous affair. The cortège stretched from the house in Adelphi Terrace to the Abbey. The famous literary club was present in full strength, and the pall-bearers were chosen from among the highest and most distinguished in the land. Had Garrick only been present in some other capacity, how it would have rejoiced his heart!

Many magnificent tributes were paid to him, the most famous of which was, of course, Dr. Johnson's utterance, "*I am disappointed by that stroke of death which has eclipsed the gaiety of nations and impoverished the public stock of harmless pleasure.*" Had the burly doctor occasionally said such things to the living as well as of the dead he might have done more than he did to brighten the life of his old pupil, with whom in spite of, indeed possibly on account of, his great success, pats had been less frequent than pin-pricks.

A few days after Garrick's death, George, his brother and general factotum, followed him to the grave, because, it was pathetically said, "David wanted him."

Mrs. Garrick survived her husband by forty-three years, living to the great age of ninety-eight, and never weary of talking of her "Davy." She continued to live in England—indeed, Garrick, by the terms of his will, took good care that she should, and divided her attention between Hampton, which she allowed to get into a dreadful state of disrepair, and Adelphi Terrace. To the last she was an inveterate theatre-goer, and met her death when dressed and ready to go to the reopening of the renovated Drury Lane Theatre.

Managers were very anxious to secure her good opinion of a new play or a new actor. If she could be persuaded that the production or the actor was worthy of comparison with the great Davy, the play or actor was made.

In this way she saw the great Edmund Kean and admitted him to be a worthy successor to David.

There are many stories current of the little old lady's widowhood. At one time Queen Charlotte visited her at Hampton, and, finding her busy peeling onions, assisted at the occupation. What with the onions and the reminiscences of dear Davy, it must have been a tearful meeting.

Few actors' features are more familiar, even to the present generation, than those of Garrick. He was sketched, painted, and engraved by nearly every artist of ability and reputation, and by many of neither. The great Sir Joshua Reynolds, and the still greater Gainsborough, each painted him more than once. The most famous Sir Joshua is that representing the great actor between Tragedy and Comedy. The magnificent portrait of Garrick which is here reproduced by the kind courtesy of Mrs. Fleischmann is that which Mrs. Garrick endorsed as being the best likeness ever done of "her Davy." The uncouth Gainsborough experienced great difficulty in painting it, for the great actor's face was never the same for two consecutive moments. But if Gainsborough's job was difficult it was certainly not dull, and in performing it he rendered posterity an everlasting service. Such portraits as this portray more than the mere countenance of the sitter, and the enduring art of the painter preserves for us a vivid glimpse of the evanescent art of the actor. One realizes as one gazes on this magnificent portrait that here is the beau-ideal of an actor, an expression of perfect fitness for the work he has got to do. The mobile expressive countenance, the sensitive mouth, the humorous twinkle in a pair of eyes that would be the envy of a Persian cat.

In build Garrick was inclined to be short and slight, inclining to stoutness in later years. But he moved about the stage with ineffable grace and manliness.

At the first glance the character of David Garrick appears as complex and as difficult to analyse as, perhaps, any of those which he was called upon to portray, and to require the pen of one whose capacity as an analyst is at least as great as that of his subject as an actor. Goldsmith said of Garrick that it was only off the stage that he was acting, and certainly the part that he played there seems to have given and brought him more trouble than all the others put together. Perhaps because it was all the others put together. Few men have given us a better opportunity of studying their life than Garrick, and the bulky and easily get-at-able correspondence written to him and by him forms a mine of information. The investigation reveals the curious and not by any means unusual picture of a man of somewhat commonplace character, with quite exceptional abilities.

The curious dualism, often noticeable in men of genius, a strong contempt for the world's opinion coupled with an equally strong desire for its good one, was very pronounced in Garrick.

That he was small-minded enough to be worried by petty jealousies is very evident, that he was often large-minded in his actions and behaved with real generosity to those of whom he was jealous is equally so. There was not a young actor of promise in his time who did not get an opportunity of showing what he could do under Garrick's management. Barry, Powell, and many other lesser fry all owed their great chances to the jealous David, who, if he may have felt like jealousy, certainly seldom behaved as if he did.

It was very much the same with regard to his meanness. He may have had some natural leanings in that direction, but if he had he fought them very successfully, for to this day there are substantial records of a generosity which did not always know its right hand from its left. Benefices instituted by him still exist. Moreover there was doubtless a huge number of unacknowledged and unrecorded gifts, loans he must have known full well would never be returned. Garrick was a most methodical man, and when these gifts and loans were acknowledged, the acknowledgment is generally to be found amongst his papers. But of course the debtors were not always so methodical, and it may fairly be conjectured that the unrecorded acts of generosity outnumbered the recorded ones. The fact probably was that Garrick was just sensible about money, and got the unfounded reputation for meanness so often levelled at Scots and Jews.

Another great fault of which Garrick was accused was snobbery. A vice which, according to some, is common to all Englishmen. Garrick undoubtedly dearly loved a lord. But snobbery is generally seen not so much in loving the lord as in pretending not to. Consequently when any one openly revels in this amiable form of vice, if it be a vice, the storm is raised not so much on account of his snobbery as his honesty. There are many folk who pride themselves on their intellects, their large hearts, their broad-mindedness, their bigness in every direction, who can forgive anything but this harmless vice! Carefully analysed, the so-called vice becomes almost a virtue. Generally speaking, a "lord" is living in the reflected glory of a cherished institution, an institution which even nowadays betokens a certain amount of power. To be a personal friend and well-received among "lords" and ladies is significant of power.

If that is still so in these democratic times, how much more was it in Garrick's time. And for a man who belonged to a stigmatized profession, reception at the houses of the great and noble meant a good deal, and Garrick's nature was far too straightforward and transparent for him to conceal his glee at a position he had won for himself by his own outstanding abilities and untiring industry.

A snob is a person who cringes, will lower himself in his own estimation, who will prostitute the dignity of his calling for the smile of rank. The manager, for instance, who will find a place in his company for the mistress of a nobleman, on that account alone, is a snob and worse than a snob. If she happens to be a good actress into the bargain, that is a different thing.

Now, Garrick sometimes cringed from fear, but never from snobbery. The nearest we get to it is when he hastens hot-foot to acquaint the King that the mighty and dreaded Junius will write no more. Anxiety to be the bearer of good news to a monarch must be a form of snobbery hard to resist!

Garrick undoubtedly dearly loved a lord, and in that, as in so many other things of his life, may have been faithful to the highest traditions of an English gentleman. That he was such is obvious, in spite of his little failings, which were all exaggerated by his enemies. It was necessary to enlarge the target that the mud might stick. And the pricking of the little pins, the consciousness of the truth of some or part of the accusations, caused Garrick to be in a continual state of terror lest they were all and wholly true, a thing very galling, not only to his self-respect, but also to his self-love, his vanity, for that was really David's weak point. He was an artist, with the artistic temperament, accustomed to see things in his mind's eye as perfect works of art, and when he looked at himself he liked that to be perfect too. An adverse criticism on his acting had no power to harm him, he knew his acting, knew when it was good and when it was bad, and how far any criticism on it was true, but he was never quite sure of himself. His vanity was as inordinate as it was inexplicable. There was really no reason why he should be so vain. He had nearly all the gifts a bounteous nature could bestow. And yet he was in a continual state of terror lest the world would not realise it. He fussed about, wrote his own notices, and went on like some one consciously in a false position. But he must have known, and realised his powers.

What was there to be afraid of? Of all human traits, vanity is perhaps the most difficult to analyse. The real meaning of the word is *emptiness*. Perhaps that explains the difficulty. There is nothing in it. One might as well attempt to analyse a vacuum!

To turn from the consideration of Garrick's little failings to his mighty virtues is a pleasant task.

For they were undoubtedly mighty, and all the more so when one considers how they held their own in the milieu into which he was thrown. He started well, for early in life he proved himself an admirable son, and his manly devotion must have greatly compensated his gentle mother for the continued absence from home—indeed the almost "legal" neglect—of her husband. And it will be remembered that, insatiable though his ambition to be an actor was, Garrick deliberately forewent opportunities of achieving it until his mother had passed beyond the reach of being hurt by such a course. For his renunciation in this respect he received a rich reward, for when he did finally make his debut, his unconventional ideas upon his art were firmly fixed, and in no danger of being crushed out of him.

As a wine merchant he was a failure, but it could scarcely be said he was such as a man of business. He appears to have been one of those souls who cannot put forth their full powers at an uncongenial occupation. For he was later to show that he was not only a man of exceptional business acumen, but also of untiring, colossal industry. He had the infinite capacity for taking pains. Another curious and splendid trait, often noticeable in the careers of great geniuses, was that whilst he got through more work than ten ordinary men, he also got through more pleasure, and the record of the gayest buck about town would probably pale before that of Garrick. It will never be said of him that he "scorned delights and lived laborious days"; rather may it be said that he accepted all delights and lived laborious nights.

On the stage he was a great actor, who took his work very seriously. He would see no stranger whilst he was at it, and always dined quietly and simply at home before he had to play an important part. No rushing away from some smart social function full of good food, good wine, good jokes, and recollections of good company, to play *Lear* or *Macbeth* to a packed house, who had paid for and expected his best.

But once work was over for the day he was, as Goldsmith has immortally described him, "an abridgment of all that is pleasant in man." He was a wit of the gentle, nimble kind, a poet of the gallant order, a squire of dames, a raconteur, the life and soul of any party of which he happened to be member. As a guest he was a host in himself. As a host there could have been no one like him. He could pay the piper or play the tune. With the candles arranged as footlights he would sometimes give little performances to his guests, which alternately amused and amazed them.

The married life of Garrick furnishes an example of domestic faithfulness, constancy, and bliss that has perhaps never been excelled on or off the stage.

For forty years, it is recorded, husband and wife never spent a single night under separate roofs, and the fact that Garrick's endless collection of manuscripts, letters, notes, and notelets (he seems to have carefully kept everything that came his way) does not contain a single missive of any description from his wife, gives very good colour to the truth of the report.

Garrick's love was not blind; he knew his wife's little weakness, and in his will made it a stipulation that she should not live abroad without first forfeiting her fortune. Why she should not do so is not very clear, unless he preferred his own weaknesses to hers, and wished the Garrick state to flourish a little longer in Adelphi Terrace and at Hampton. Garrick left a fortune amounting to the comfortable sum of a hundred thousand pounds, every penny of which was left to his wife and his relations.

It is curious that he should have left nothing to any of his many and great friends, and gives more colour to the assertion that he was mean. On the other hand, he always seems to have had a very strong sense of his duty to his family—he took endless trouble and pains to reconcile them all to each other and his profession. Moreover, they were, none of them, well provided for, whilst most of his friends were, and he had more than done his duty by the poor of his profession in his lifetime.

One of his greatest ambitions seems to have been to raise his family from provincial obscurity to a position of some importance in the country, and to a certain extent he succeeded, but quite as much by his fame as by his wealth.

One cannot close this short sketch of the character of this admirable man better than by quoting in full Goldsmith's Eulogy and Elegy from "*Retaliation*":

> "Here lies David Garrick, describe me who can
> An abridgment of all that was pleasant in man;
> As an actor confessed without rival to shine,
> As a wit if not first, in the very first line.
> Yet with talents like these, and an excellent heart,
> The man had his failings, a dupe to his art.
> Like an ill-judging beauty, his colours he spread
> And beplastered with rouge his own natural red.

On the stage he was natural, simple, affecting,
'Twas only that when he was off he was acting.
With no reason on earth to go out of his way
He turned and he varied full ten times a day:
Though secure of our hearts yet confoundedly sick
If they were not his own by finessing and trick;
He cast off his friends as a huntsman his pack,
For he knew when he pleased he could whistle them back;
Of praise a mere glutton, he swallowed what came,
And the puff of a dunce, he mistook it for fame:
Till his relish grown callous almost to disease,
Who peppered the highest, was surest to please.
But let us be candid, and speak out our mind,
If dunces applauded he paid them in kind.
Ye Kenricks, ye Kellys, ye Woodfalls so grave,
What a commerce was yours, while you got and you gave!
How did Grub Street re-echo the shouts that you raised
While he was be-Rosciused and you were bepraised.
But peace to his spirit, wherever it flies,
To act as an angel and mix with the skies;
Those poets, who owe their best fame to his skill,
Shall still be his flatterers, go where he will,
Old Shakespeare receive him with praise and with love,
And Beaumonts and Bens be his Kellys above."

As an artist there is no doubt whatever that David Garrick is entitled to a place in the very first rank. No one was ever found to cavil at his consummate ability as an actor. His most bitter opponents were dumb upon the subject of his art, except when compelled to such admissions as Murphy's, "Oh, my great God";[1] and, as we have seen, even those to whom his coming meant extinction were forced to turn and applaud the conqueror.

Not only the force and brilliancy, but the wide range of his abilities, astounded and disarmed his critics. He was probably the most versatile actor that ever had trod the stage. It seemed almost as though he had passed through and perfected himself in all its stages and branches before arriving at the summit of his art, and that all this had been done in some secret place and that no one ever saw anything but the completed article. That is the way with real genius. It was the way with Shakespeare, and it is the way which ordinary mortals seldom understand, and which gives rise to Bacon-Shakespeare theories, often the outcome of unconscious human jealousy.

---

[1] Murphy, the dramatist, used to say that "off the stage Garrick was a mean, snivelling little fellow, but on the stage—'Oh, my great God!'"

Genius is a compelling phenomenon. A man acts because he must, writes because he must, or paints because he must, just as the lark sings, because he must sing, and Shelley sang about that song. Genius is spontaneous and infinite in its capacity for taking pains. The two things are not incompatible.

Genius is really inseparable from character. Garrick realized this to the full, hence the careful tending that kept his genius blooming till the last. Kean did not realize it, and lost his ability. Nevertheless there seem to have been two Garricks, one off and one on the stage, and yet there were not two Garricks, but one Garrick, and that one a consummate actor! In that lies the explanation of Garrick's virtues and his failings. His was the actor's ability, not the author's. He could realize another's creation, but not create for himself. Hence the wonder of his *King Lear*, his *Richard*, his *Abel Drugger*, his *Don Felix*, and the wretchedness of his *David Garrick*, that character in which he was always a failure. Goldsmith said "it was only off the stage that he was acting," acting badly would have been better, and acting a badly drawn character too.

He suffered from the defects of his qualities, and tried to realize his own idea of what he ought, or rather what he thought others thought he ought to be.

In short, he did not know when to stop acting, a not unusual complaint in his calling. I once had the honour of dining with a very distinguished actor of our times. He was a remarkable-looking man, and one could not help feeling a wonderful being. He was sitting at a table quite quietly and naturally, when suddenly the devil whispered to him that he was not being sufficiently impressive. He thereupon sprang to his feet and made a more egregious ass of himself than most men are capable of doing. Yet no actor ever lived who could have rendered true impressiveness better. He could portray, that is the actor's business, but he could not conceive, that is the author's!

It was the same with Garrick, and explains at once the marvellous performance of *King Lear* and the ridiculous changes and innovations that he countenanced in the play, the marriage of *Cordelia* and *Edmund*, the restoration of *Lear* to his throne and his senses, and other tomfoolery. Garrick's much-vaunted love for Shakespeare was probably only a love for him as vehicle for his own matchless accomplishments, as a man will love a favourite golf-club or fishing-rod. This love and his ambition alike "o'erleaped themselves and fell on the other side," at the Nemesis of the Stratford Jubilee.

But unfortunately they did not hurt themselves much and popped up again at the ridiculous version of "*Hamlet*" a few months later. Like many others Garrick tried to do too much. Not content with acting, or acting and producing, he tried his hand at adapting, and laid sacrilegious hands on the most sacred works of art.

In so doing he harmed himself too, for the world never saw what he undoubtedly could have done with the real ending of *Lear*. But those who saw his terrifying portrayal of a father who had let his child drop out of the window had a hint of it.

As a proof of his wonderful compass he would switch from this to the idiotically terrified amazement of the village idiot who has dropped a dish of pies in the mud. Why Garrick never played the real *Lear* will never really be known. Was he afraid of it? Did he underrate his powers as an actor just as he overrated them as an author? For he was an author in a small way. He wrote and adapted many excellent comedies, prologues, epilogues, epigrams, epitaphs, was a first-rate letter-writer, and something of a wit. In fact like nearly all great geniuses he seems to have had the capacity to do anything, and the sense to have carried one thing right through, if not to the end, very nearly there. There was altogether too much policy in Garrick's life and art, and it was probably that which prevented his giving the real *Lear*. Also no one seems to have realized at the time what they were missing. There is no doubt that Garrick could have played it. As things were, his *Lear* was an acknowledged masterpiece. It was not all done at once. It was not altogether an unqualified success at the first performance, but bit by bit Garrick built it up until it towered above any other performance of his own or any other time. But why, oh why, did he never put on the coping-stone? In many another tragedy he showed his immense ability. His *Hamlet* was, after his *Lear*, perhaps his greatest portrayal, and there again he played the fool with the play and cut out the graveyard scene, one of the most moving scenes in all Shakespeare. But the anguish of the scene with his mother was unsurpassed. No one, not even Kean, seems ever to have approached it. His *Macbeth*, too, was a terrifying success, in spite of the ridiculous manner in which it was dressed. According to Zoffany's picture in the Garrick Club, he wore the white wig and uniform of a Georgian General. Mrs. Pritchard as *Lady Macbeth* is in a bustle, panniers and hoops, and the two look like a couple of servants, up to mischief, scared by the untimely arrival of their lord and master.

The portraits of Garrick as *Lear* and *Hamlet*, still attired in his knee-breeches and a cut-away coat, are equally absurd, but this all goes to prove how very little dress really matters. It is certainly not the raiment that makes the actor, and that Garrick was an actor, and probably the very greatest we have had, seems certain.

Certainly no one in our times has evoked such a unanimous and universal chorus of approval. The nearest approach to a Garrick of modern times was probably M. Coquelin *aîné*, the great French actor, but he was primarily a comedian ; at the same time he played tragedy magnificently, as all who saw his *Cyrano de Bergerac* can testify. Every true comedian must be a bit of a tragedian.

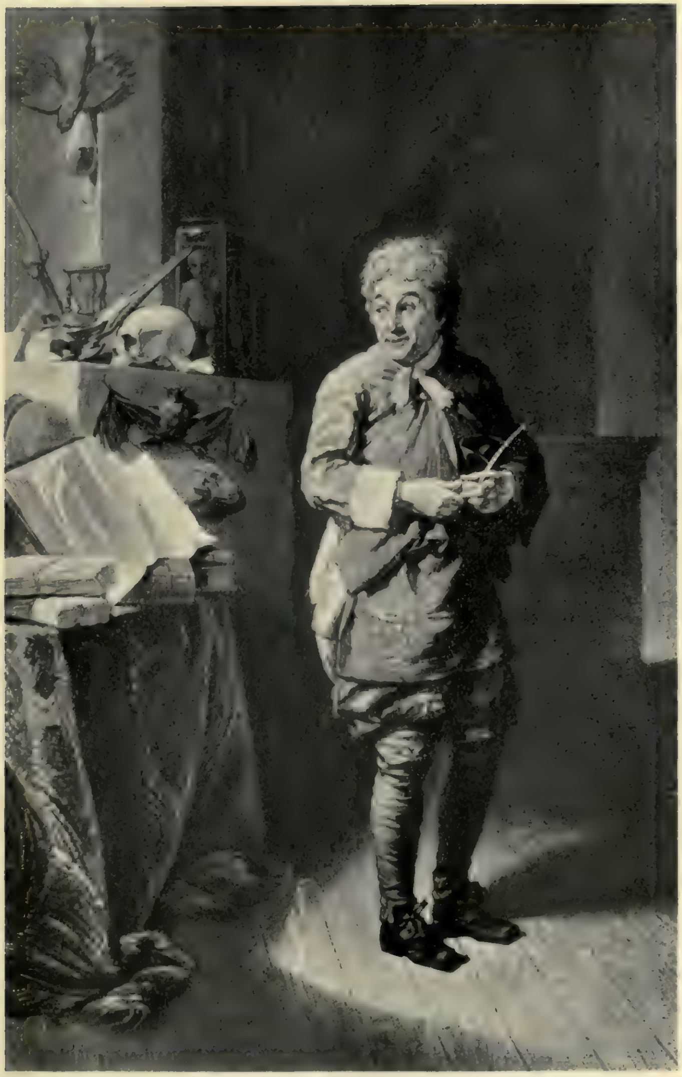
It sometimes seems as though comedy required more real intellect than tragedy. "*Othello*," especially, is a tragedy in which "brainy" men often fail. Garrick did so, hopelessly, so also did Sir Henry Irving in our own day. The greatest *Othellos* have been Barry and Kean, neither of them actors of the extremely intellectual type. Garrick's comedy seems to have been perfect, and has been handed down to us in the admirable portrait of him, here reproduced, as *Abel*

Drugger. The expression of comic imbecility and servility is delicious. In the higher walks of comedy he was equally successful and never seems to have found a rival as *Benedick.*

As a producer and manager we have the written authority to Garrick's excellence of no less an expert than Mistress Kitty Clive. As an actor-manager he was an example to all. He had no selfishly ambitious desire to shine alone, but surrounded himself with a first-rate company of men and women, many of whom confirmed his judgment by the eminence to which they afterwards attained. Had Garrick been as fine a judge of a play as he was of an actor, his career as a manager would have been still more phenomenally successful. But his judgment was sadly lacking in that respect. He accepted and produced a fearful lot of trash, and refused such plays as "*The Good-Natured Man*" and "*She Stoops to Conquer.*" Doubtless much of the trash was produced under threats, for Garrick was an easy little man to intimidate.

In a book recently published, by F. Hedgecock, *Garrick and his French Friends*, we find a convincing unanimity of opinion as to his marvellous gifts on the part of his French contemporaries.

It is a pity he never gave them the opportunity of seeing him play on their boards, but his little extemporary performances and excerpts from his repertoire astounded them. Clairon could never forget his expression as the distracted father who had dropped his babe, nor his wonderful performance of the dagger scene from *Macbeth.* There is very good ground for believing the truth of the story already related of his frightening a murderer into confession by his realistic presentment of the murdered man. At another time we hear of his



GARRICK AS "ABEL DRUGGER."

mystifying a poor old French cabby by getting into his cab as one man and out of it as another, simply by changing his countenance.

The fact that he was able to do all these things, and do them convincingly, bespeaks consummate mastery of his art in every direction.

As already stated, Garrick had the pen of a ready writer and the tongue of a ready wit. The epitaph on Hogarth and the poem to his "Lovely Peggy" are admirable.

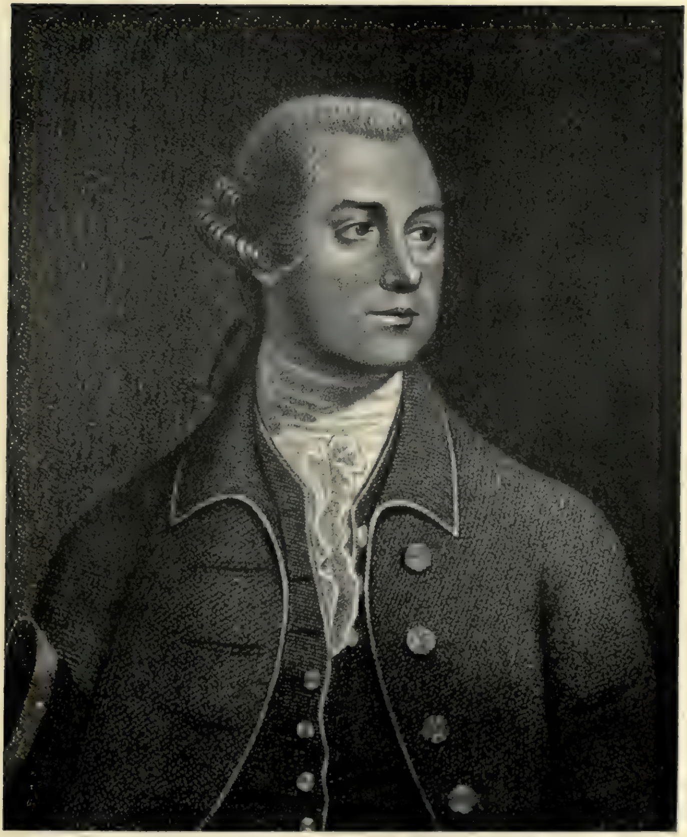
As an adapter and tinkerer at plays, as long as they were not by Shakespeare, he was excellent. He was "an abridgment of all that was pleasant" in an artist as well as in a man, excepting in his acting. There there was no abridgment, but fulfilment.

We are still waiting for his like to appear again. He is still occupying the chair of the "Rosciad," waiting to place an equal there. For a time it was thought that Edmund Kean might worthily occupy it, but he, mighty genius though he was, had not the same comprehensive mastery of the actor's art in all its branches as the great David Garrick.

SPRANGER BARRY

1719–1777

SPRANGER BARRY was born on the 20th November, 1719, in Skinner Row, Dublin. Although he was the son of a silversmith, he is said to have been of noble descent, a descendant of the last Lord Santry. His personal appearance and gifts, as he grew up, certainly bespoke high breeding, as did some of his extremely "lordly" propensities. He was early apprenticed to his father's craft, settled down and married a wife with a dowry of £15,000, and at one time it seemed as though he would end his days as an obscure, respected citizen of comfortable means. But they were evidently not comfortable enough for Barry. By the time he was thirty they were rapidly disappearing, and had disappeared entirely by the time he was thirty-four, and the respectable plus sign had given place to a long minus one. In short, Barry went bankrupt, and it became important that he should do something to try to restore his fallen fortunes; so he went on the stage, and in the easy fashion of those days made his first appearance at his own benefit in the character of *Othello*, a part which, according to Hitchcock, the historian of the Irish stage, was especially and judiciously chosen for his debut. Judging by results, the choice was certainly a happy one, for in that character Barry made perhaps the greatest success



SPRANGER BARRY.

of his brilliantly successful career. Nature had richly endowed him for the portrayal of the noble Moor. No one ever calls him a jealous Moor, although that is perhaps the keynote of the tragedy.

Barry was tall and handsome, with a voice which seemed to contain some of the silver of his early trade. His famous first appearance, second only to that of Garrick, of whom Barry was afterwards considered a worthy rival, was made at the old Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin on 15th February, 1744. It was at the time when Sheridan had temporarily retired from the management and the theatre had joined forces with the Aungier Street house. Things theatrical were at a very low ebb in the Irish capital, and according to his well-wishers Barry appeared at an inauspicious time. As a matter of fact he could not have chosen a more auspicious one, from the point of view of some one with a light on a dark night.

His *Iago* was Wright, the then leading comedian of the Irish stage, and his *Desdemona* Mrs. Bayly. In spite of the dazzling success of his first performance he did not have things entirely his own way, or indeed mainly his own way, for the great Samuel Foote had also been engaged, and naturally had the lion's share of the pickings. It would not have been safe, for many reasons, to have let him do otherwise. But Barry did not do at all badly all the same, and played, amongst other characters, *Lear*, *Henry V*, *Orestes*, and *Hotspur;* not so bad for a beginner. And a treat and an education in one was in store for him the following season, when he had the inestimable advantage of appearing with the great Garrick.

At the earnest request of the proprietors Sheridan had returned from England and taken over the entire management of the Smock Alley house. One of his first, and greatest, moves as a manager was to engage Garrick and Mrs. Bellamy, and so when the great actor paid his second visit to Dublin, his principal support, after Sheridan himself, was Spranger Barry. Nor did Barry merely support him, but in *Othello* was actually supported by him. Garrick alternated with Sheridan the part of *Iago*. And the young actor made good use of this fine opportunity, and impressed Garrick so favourably, that the great little man used his influence with Lacy of Drury Lane, with the result that Barry was offered and accepted an engagement there the following year, 1746.

On the 4th October, 1746, Barry made his first appearance at Drury Lane in the character of *Othello*. He made a great success, and henceforward rivalled Garrick himself. The two great actors alternated the parts of *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*. It is said that in the former honours were divided, though in the latter Garrick easily carried off the laurels; but then Barry got some of his own back in *Othello*, which had been one of Garrick's failures. Barry was meanwhile improving himself under the very able tuition of Macklin, at whose benefit he appeared as *Hamlet* on 24th February, 1747.

On 13th February, 1748, there was a great performance of Moore's "*Foundling*," with such a cast as is only seen nowadays on very state occasions. Garrick played *Young Belmont*, Macklin *Faddle*, and Barry *Sir Charles Raymond*. Mrs. Woffington played *Rosetta*, and Mrs. Cibber *Fidelia*, *the Foundling*. Garrick, with his marvellous ability, revealed hitherto unsuspected possibilities in *Young Belmont;* Macklin's performance of the obsequious knave, *Faddle*, was a masterpiece; and Barry, in the pathetic character of *Sir Charles Raymond*, drew tears from every one in the audience. Needless to say, the women's parts were perfectly safe in such hands.

On 10th March, 1750, Barry, for his benefit, played "*Othello*," supported by Garrick as *Iago*, which must have been a performance worth seeing. He remained at Drury Lane until the end of the season of 1749–50, when he left and went over to Covent Garden, partly, it is said, on account of the jealousy aroused in Garrick by his performance of *Romeo*. The public were very soon to be given the opportunity of comparing the two, for on 28th September, 1750, "*Romeo and Juliet*" was produced simultaneously at the two houses. Barry, at Covent Garden, was supported by Macklin as *Mercutio* and Mrs. Cibber as *Juliet;* at Drury Lane Garrick had the benefit of Woodward as *Mercutio* and Miss Bellamy as *Juliet*. The duel continued for twelve nights, until the town got heartily sick of it, and the situation was well summed up in the following epigram:

"'Well, what's to-night?' says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses.
'Romeo again,' and shakes his head:
'A plague on both your houses.'"

There were many stories current of the amusing scenes that took place at the one theatre when visited by angry partisans from the other. One night Miss Bellamy's plaintive request of, "*Romeo, Romeo; wherefore art thou Romeo?*" met with a ready response from an Irish partisan in the gallery: "Faith, because Barry's at the other house!"

Regarding the respective merits of the two *Romeos* it was generally thought that Barry, with his superior physical attractions, won the day. When real subtlety and force of acting were required, as in the scenes with the *Friar* and the *Apothecary*, and from the time *Romeo* takes the poison to the end of the play, Garrick easily led; but on the whole Barry must have been undoubtedly the better *Romeo*. The two performances were exactly paralleled by those of the two *Juliets*, but the two managers should have exchanged leading ladies, Miss Bellamy's performance being more suited to Barry, and Mrs. Cibber's to Garrick.

Garrick, as though to emphasize what he considered a victory, kept his production on one day longer than Covent Garden.

Of the two *Mercutios*, Woodward's was evidently far the better, although Macklin made a good fight against his unsuitable personality. Mrs. Macklin gave a first-rate rendering of the *Nurse*.

Barry remained at Covent Garden until 1754, playing all his old characters and creating some new ones, amongst which were *Lothario*, in the "*Fair Penitent*," a part for which he was very well suited by nature and habits; *Faulconbridge* to the *King John* of Quin, with whom, like every one else, he had frequent quarrels; and *Oronooko*. During this season Barry seems at times not to have been above giving himself the airs usually associated with leading ladies. He more than once absented himself from performances on the plea of illnesses that were more imaginary than real. On the whole there seems little doubt that he was becoming a somewhat spoilt darling. In 1753 he played *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Miss Nossiter, a lady at that time living under his protection. The fact that they were known to be lovers, at first drew many people to the theatre in the hopes of seeing "*Romeo and Juliet*" perfectly played by people in the right condition, but even love had not the power to turn Miss Nossiter into a good actress, and the audiences were disappointed.

Barry gave his last performance this season in *Romeo* on 22nd May, 1754, and after that seceded from Covent Garden, assuring the manager, Rich, that the theatre could not go on without him, but it did! He sailed for Ireland to fulfil an engagement at the Smock Alley Theatre, then under the management of Victor and Snowden. He secured very advantageous terms not only for himself, but also for Miss Nossiter, whom he seems to have foisted on to Dublin more successfully than on to London. From his own point of view his season was successful, though not from his manager's, for the balance at the close was barely on the right side. He had his experience of a riot in the theatre, without which no popular actor's life was complete in those days. The audience demanded a performance of "*Mahomet*" in place of another play that had been announced. Though a bad play, "*Mahomet*" was popular in Ireland, as things sometimes are to this day, owing to certain inflammatory patriotic speeches. The audience's request was eventually acceded to, but the house did not justify the concession. Barry also played, during this season, *King Lear*, and Hitchcock gives a very interesting letter to the actor from his manager on the subject of this performance. On the whole it seems to have been a fairly good one in all but the most terrible and moving scenes, which was usually the case with Barry. He could not portray parts requiring any very great depths of feeling. At the close of the season he returned to Covent Garden, reappearing there in "*Hamlet*," 12th November, 1755. He was received with rapturous applause, but was unfortunate in his *Ophelia*, inefficiently played by one Mrs. Vincent, *vice* Mrs. Cibber, retired in a huff! Mrs. Woffington played the *Queen*, but the production could not compare with that at Drury Lane, when Garrick had the support of Mrs. Pritchard and Woodward. On 15th December Barry gave a wonderful performance in the revival of a play called "*The Rival Queens*," which had not been acted for twelve years. He is said, in this, to have ranged the gamut of all the emotions, but as the play has not lived it may be presumed that the emotions were not very real, but probably just the stagey artificial stuff that Barry would do to perfection. He is said to have looked like a god! The *Rival Queens* were Mrs. Bellamy and Mrs. Woffington, who had grown quite accustomed to playing those parts off the stage and behind the scenes. In this play matters reached a climax and Mrs. Woffington very nearly stabbed her rival in real earnest. The principal cause of the trouble being, that Mrs. Bellamy had two lovely dresses, new from Paris, and Mrs. Woffington had none. "It is fortunate," says Mrs. Woffington, "that you have a cabinet minister (meaning Fox) who can afford to indulge your extravagance." "Pity *half the town* cannot do as much for you!" retorts Mrs. Bellamy, and so the green-room squabble continues and provides good material for Foote, who produces a skit on it at the Haymarket.

On 26th February, 1756, Barry appeared in London for the first time as *King Lear*. He was, of course, at once contrasted with Garrick, but did not emerge successfully from the contest, although his *Lear* undoubtedly had its points. But Garrick's was a tremendous performance, probably the finest that has ever been given of this greatest of human tragedies. The town's opinion of the two renderings was well summed up in the two famous epigrams already referred to.[1]

On 27th January, 1757, Garrick had another triumph over his rival, for on that date Barry made his first appearance as *Richard III*, and was a most dismal failure. No one seems to have had a good word to say for his playing of the part.

In 1758 he returned to Dublin, this time as a manager. In partnership with Woodward he had rebuilt the Crow Street Theatre. Macklin also had an interest in the theatre, which, as usual, terminated in a quarrel and a secession. The theatre was opened on 23rd October, 1758, with a performance of the comedy "*She Would and She Would Not*," in the cast of which King's was the only name of any note at all. Barry reserved his own appearance until 23rd November, when he appeared as *Hamlet*, and then the battle between the two Dublin houses began in earnest. The upshot of it was that both parties, whilst getting practically none of the spoils of war, were badly wounded. Barry, to whom being in debt was a normal condition, did not mind much, but Woodward, who was a very careful man, felt his losses keenly. However, the two determined to tempt fortune again, and in 1761 opened a new theatre in Cork. Amongst the company was Mrs. Dancer, who had succeeded to Barry's affections *vice* Miss Nossiter, left behind at Covent Garden.

The Cork venture, although successful, was not sufficient to stave failure from Dublin, and in 1762 Woodward withdrew from partnership, returning to

---

[1] See *ante*, "*David Garrick*," page 39.

Covent Garden. Barry continued in command at Crow Street. His principal support was Macklin, and his son Thomas was also a member of the company, but not a particularly successful one. One of the most notable and successful things was the production of the masque "*King Arthur*," in which the great composer Purcell first sprang into fame. Barry's tenure of managership continued for four or five years, during which time he had under his banner Messrs. Macklin, Sheridan, Foote and Tate Wilkinson, King, and Mesdames Abington, Dancer, Fitzhenry. He had a doughty opponent at Smock Alley in the person of Henry Mossop, and that gentleman enjoyed the somewhat barren fruits of victory, for in June, 1764, Barry, at last recognizing failure, handed over the theatre to Mossop, who thus became proprietor of two theatres, and much good did they do him!

After a short and successful season in Cork and Limerick, Barry returned to London and made his reappearance under Foote at the Haymarket. There he stayed for some years with his new leading lady, Mrs. Dance, whom he married in 1768, the two obstacles, her husband and his wife, being comfortably removed by death.

Previously to this, in 1767, Barry had been engaged by Garrick, under whom he made his reappearance at Drury Lane in his favourite character of *Othello* on 21st October of that year.

He remained under Garrick's management until 1774, playing all his old characters, some new ones of minor importance, and always accompanied by Mrs. Barry. In 1774, still accompanied by her he again migrated to Covent Garden, and here he began to break up. Twinges of gout assailed him, and we see that on 24th January, 1775, "*As You Like It*" was put up, and Barry played *Jaques!* A few short years back and he would have made an ideal *Orlando.* Then again on 15th January, 1776, *Young Norval* (Douglas) is exchanged for *Old Norval.* Old playbills have their eloquence.

Barry's time was now drawing to a close. It had been a royal one. Courted and fêted by every one, worshipped by the opposite sex, his career, in spite of his extravagances and business worries, was one long round of splendour. Splendour, however, which occasionally gave offence to some who considered that he lived above his station. He died on 10th January, 1777, and was buried in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey, but his great rival, Garrick, was buried inside! Mrs. Barry survived him for nearly thirty years, was again married to a man much younger than herself, named Crawford, but she survived him also. As an actress she improved greatly as time went on, and ended her career in the very first flight of her profession. On 29th November, 1801, she too died, and was buried in the cloisters of the Abbey, beside her favourite husband.

The character of James Spranger Barry was just what one might have expected from his environment.

He was what circumstances made him. That is to say, circumstances did what they liked with him. Moreover, they liked him, and he them. He was a weak, self-indulgent man, beautiful to look upon, with a silver-tongued voice that no woman or audience ever could resist. He had genuine taste and talent for acting, and loved to cut a right royal figure on and off the stage, was very fond of horses, and lived well beyond his means, which at one time were considerable. There is no evidence of any particular acumen or cleverness, excepting in his art, of which he seems to have thoroughly mastered the more showy side. He did as much work as was necessary to accomplish that, and no more.

He was recklessly extravagant, and he never stopped to think off the stage, and not more than was absolutely necessary, on. He just took things as they came, and they came just as he wanted them. He had, of course, his fair share of vanity, and sometimes thought that neither theatres nor the drama could get on without him. They certainly would be the poorer without the type which he represented. At the same time his vanity, which was excusable, was not so conspicuous as that of many who had less outward reason to be vain. The best and worst that can be said about Barry's character is that he had none. Life was a landslide down which he slid, not turning out of his way either to harm a fly, or indeed to avoid harming one. With all his flightiness and butterfly nature he was sincerely attached to his second wife, and sincerely detached from his first one! When towards the end of his life the chickens came home to roost and he began to pay the price of his long self-indulgence, he seems to have borne his sufferings with calmness and fortitude. He was always amiable, and his amiability survived this somewhat severe test. He was kind and generous to his fellow-actors in distress, but did not always recognize, as in the case of Woodward for instance, the large share he may have had in that distress. He attributed things to fate, that convenient spectre that hovers in the background and, like the scapegoat of old, bears all our iniquities in a land which we shall one day have to inhabit. Spranger

Barry was a gay Lothario, a butterfly, but there was one thing that lifted him head and shoulders above others of his ilk, and that was his real, genuine, unmistakable talent. With all his "butterflights" and his ostentation there was one serious thing he could do, and do thoroughly well, and he knew it. That thing was to act.

He deserves a place in a century of great actors, not because he was a great actor in the broadest sense of the word, but because he undoubedly was in his own line. He was a great romantic actor, probably the finest lover our stage has ever seen. He was gifted in every way for the part. His handsome face and bearing, his silver-tongued voice, the romantic halo of wild Irish irresponsibility that always hovered around him, his tender heart, the frank publicity of his love affairs. He was proud of his inamoratas, and they were proud of him. All these things invested him with romance before he stepped on to the stage. Small wonder that he was an ideal *Romeo*, that his *Othello* was perhaps the finest in point of nobility and romantic splendour our stage has ever seen. It is easy to assume a virtue, if you have it not, especially on the stage, and the nobility of the showy type the easiest of it all. To enact the Moor Barry only had to assume a little nobility, nature had done the rest. Of course his performance could not be compared for sheer ability and force to Edmund Kean's, whose wonderful eyes were practically his only external gift. But in the final pictorial effect Barry's *Othello* seems to have been perfect.

It was perhaps a little *too* beautiful at the finish. On the other hand, it does not do, even in a murder scene, to o'erstep the modesty of nature, a thing that

Kean was sometimes inclined to do, and that Salvini certainly did. The most dramatic and moving murder in Shakespeare takes place behind a closed door, the murder of *Duncan* in "*Macbeth*." How well the ancient Greeks knew the value of this many a grand tragedy can testify. Surely the murder of *Desdemona* could and should take place behind the bed curtains. What an opportunity for a fine actor and actress to see objectively the effect of their own performance. They disappear behind the curtain, the terrified sounds and twitchings may be produced by any one, and *Desdemona* and *Othello* can have the valuable experience of witnessing the full effects of their work.

Othello offers a unique opportunity to an actor of Barry's calibre, for the character is so many-sided that even if he fail in the tragedy much remains behind. It is not like *Macbeth*, where all is tragedy, and the finer traits of the hero, if hero he can be called, are only hinted at. But we see *Othello* in his grandeur as well as in his fall. He is undoubtedly a noble man, according to his lights, but they are horrible lights. The murder of *Desdemona* is to him a thing that has got to be done. Beneath his civilized exterior is the primitive savage with the primitive savage instinct, which destroys the whole because a part is rotten. That is the instinct at the back of all "self-righteous" tragedy, the worst tragedy of all. In this respect *Othello* bears a close relationship to Greek tragedy, and especially to the king of Greek tragedies, *Ædipus Rex*. In each case the climax is reached in an access and excess of self-righteousness. The self-righteousness of *Othello* and the self-condemnation of *Ædipus* are closely akin. Self-righteousness murders the other person, self-condemnation itself. *Othello*, in his own words, says he thought to make a sacrifice. Abraham was under the same impression with regard to Isaac, till perhaps the good in him caused him to stay his hand and see things from Isaac's point of view. The greatest tragedies are often brought about when acting under an undue sense of what is right!

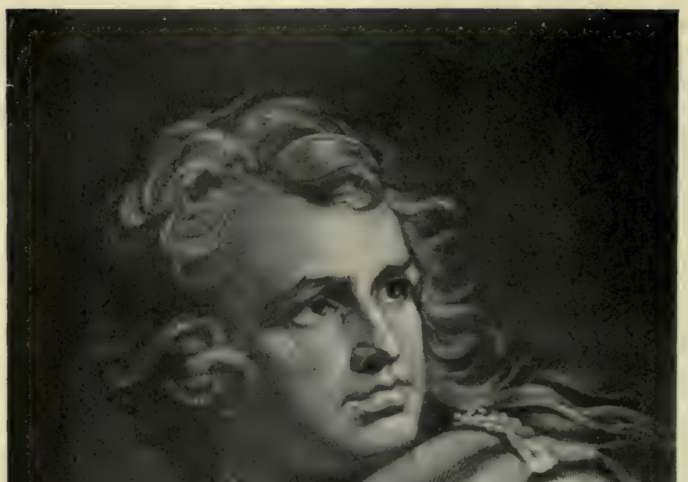
For this reason perhaps "*Othello*" is a more appalling tragedy than "*Macbeth*," though not so terrible as "*King Lear*," which is still more poignant and seemingly founded on the good in human nature, surely it is the supreme tragedy of literature.

Of the three great tragedies "*Othello*" is, perhaps, the easiest to play, given the requisite physical gifts. It might almost be called a straight part. *Othello* does not stop to think. He practically never thinks. He only fears, and contrasts *Desdemona's* virtues with her vices —a very dangerous proceeding. *Macbeth*, on the other hand, is always thinking, has not the courage of his conclusions, and is a coward. Some say that the tragedy of *Hamlet* is that he thinks too much ; but is it not that he does not go on thinking long enough? But *Othello* scarcely seems capable of thinking. Admirable as he may have been as a soldier, he is not really bright, only a primitive savage blinded with terror, jealousy, and the glamour of so-called civilization. Clever brainy actors, as we have already seen, have generally failed in this part, probably through their very cleverness.

Othello was the high-water mark of Barry's genius, and *Romeo* came next. The two characters have much in common, both are intensely emotional, both blinded by love, and both thoughtless. That is to say, *Romeo* does not think, and *Othello* does not reason. "She loved me for the dangers I had passed," said he, and then promptly gets jealous of *Cassio*, who had not passed any dangers to speak of! Barry was an ideal exponent of both, although his *Othello* may have been a little sugary compared to Edmund Kean's.

One can scarcely believe he could have realized the savage so well as Kean. On the other hand, he was very probably better as the lover. For that was Barry's part. He was a great lover, on and off the stage.

He does not seem to have had any other accomplishments, except those of riding, driving, and being a man about town generally and a buck of the first water.



JOHN HENDERSON AS "MACBETH."

JOHN HENDERSON

1747-1785

JOHN HENDERSON was born in Goldsmith Street, Cheapside, in the early part of 1747. His father was an Irish factor of Scottish descent. He died a little more than a year after John's birth, and his widow retired to Newport Pagnell, Buckinghamshire, where she managed to support herself and her two sons upon the interest of less than a thousand pounds. She educated them herself, and taught them to read and recite passages from the best authors. John Henderson's marvellous memory began to assert itself at a very early age; almost as soon as he could talk at all he could speak long speeches from Shakespeare. Nor was he content with merely speaking them, but early began to suit the action to the word and spread himself generally as an actor. He also showed some drawing ability, and at the age of twelve was placed as a sort of house-pupil with Daniel Fournier, the artist. Previous to this he had put in a year's schooling at Hemel Hempstead under Doctor Stirling. Fournier was a curious character, who wished to excel at everything, and certainly did in many. But he seems to have treated his pupil much as Mr. Squeers did, and one of Henderson's duties was to drive him in a one-horse chay to visit his different pupils in the neighbourhood of London and to perform the duties of groom on returning home. Whilst at Fournier's, Henderson is said to have done a wonderful drawing, in the style of Teniers, of an old fisherman smoking a pipe, which obtained for him the second premium from the "Society for the Encouragement of Arts." From Fournier's he went to live with a Mr. Cripps, a jeweller, and a relative of his mother's, to whom it was intended that he should be apprenticed; but unfortunately Cripps died, and Henderson was early thrown upon his own resources, which were then very meagre. Various professions were suggested, assistant in a silversmith's shop and a banker's clerk being among them, but Henderson was fortunate enough to have a very good friend who advised him very strongly to go on the stage, and offered to support him until such time as he got an engagement.

His first attempt at acting was made in a barn at Islington, where he recited Garrick's Stratford Ode, in imitation of the great actor, so well that one of his audience remarked it was either the great Mr. Garrick himself or antichrist! He joined a little literary society at this time, which used to meet and pour copious libations to its gods at a small house in Maiden Lane. Henderson's pet hero was Sterne, from which he became known among his friends as "Shandy." He wrote an elaborate but scarcely immortal ode "to be spoken at the tomb of the late Laurence Sterne on his birthday." He also had a weakness for tales of horror and sensationalism. His biographer, Ireland, suggests that this training was afterwards invaluable to him when portraying *Macbeth* and other bloody villains! Another little weakness, and one that certainly did him more harm than good, was his propensity for, and skill in, imitating Garrick.

When he was not imitating the great little man he was trying to get a personal interview with him. On one occasion when he appealed for help to one of Garrick's satellites, that gentleman pulled out a foot-rule, measured Henderson from head to foot, and said, "I am very sorry to mortify you, sir, but you will not do for an actor, not by an inch and a quarter." A method of measuring the capabilities of an actor that is by no means unknown at the present time. If either Henderson, Garrick, or Kean were to present themselves at some London theatres to-day they would often be told they were too short! Wherever Henderson applied he met with nothing but rebuffs. Now his voice was too loud, now too soft, now too fat, and now too thin. But he persevered and at last gained the day. The great Garrick consented to hear him rehearse before him. After the rehearsal Garrick said that his voice had neither the strength nor modulation requisite for the London stage, and advised him to try his fortune in the country. Garrick himself would write to Mr. Palmer, of Bath, which he did, and Henderson to his great joy received the offer of a three years' engagement at a rising salary of from one to two guineas a week. To do Garrick justice he shared his poor opinion of Henderson's merits with a great many others, so his good offices appear disinterested and not merely efforts to get a rising star out of London, as is sometimes hinted. Though Garrick certainly often felt jealousy, to do him justice he seldom let it influence his actions, and many great and successful actors owed their first footing to Little Davy.

Henderson made his first appearance on any stage at Bath on 6th October, 1772, as *Hamlet*. Aut Cæsar aut Nullus! He was very apprehensive indeed, and elected to appear under the assumed name of Courtney. Old Mr. Giffard, of Goodman's Fields, Garrick's theatrical godfather, was present. His opinion, well worth having, for he had seen many rise to and fall from fame, was very favourable indeed, and he prophesied a great future for the young man. It was the old man's last prophecy, for after the performance he returned home to Ealing and died a few days afterwards. Henderson was dreadfully nervous when he first went on the stage, and could scarcely stand or speak, but he gradually gained confidence, and the public were so pleased with him that they allowed him to "do it again" the following week. The ice broken, he was now seen in a series of all the popular rôles of that time. He played, amongst others, *Richard III*, *Benedick*, *Bobadill* in "*Every Man in His Humour*," *Bayes* in "*The Rehearsal*," *Hotspur*, *Hastings*, *King Lear*. Not a bad record for a novice's first season! He earned for himself the title of "The Bath Roscius," and the friendship of several very distinguished "Bathers," including Whitehead the poet and the great Gainsborough, who painted his portrait, and gave him some very sound and sage advice on the subjects of his art and of over-eating. In the same letter the great painter expresses his opinion of Garrick as the "greatest creature living, in every respect." "Look upon him, Henderson," runs the letter, "with your imitative eyes, for when he drops you'll have nothing but old Nature's book to look in. You'll be left to grope about alone, or by a farthing candle. Now is your time, my lively fellow. And do you hear, don't eat so devilishly!"

Gainsborough himself was not unlike Garrick in some respects. Whilst he excelled in one form of art, he had strong leanings towards others. He was an admirable letter-writer and conversationalist when he cared to trouble himself to be so, and a real devotee of music. In another letter he again impresses upon Henderson the importance of sticking to Garrick:—

"In all but eating stick to Garrick. In that let him stick to you, for I'll be cursed if you are not his master. Never mind about the fools who talk of imitation and copying. All is imitation, and if you quit that natural likeness to Garrick which your mother bestowed upon you, you'll be slung—ask Garrick else.

"Why, sir, what makes the difference between man and man is real performance, and not genius or conception. There are a thousand Garricks, a thousand Giardinis, and Fishers, and Abels. Why only one Garrick, with Garrick's eyes, voice, etc. etc.? One Giardini with Giardini's fingers? etc. etc. But one Fisher with Fisher's dexterity, quickness, etc.? Or more than one Abel with Abel's feeling upon the instrument? All the rest of the world are mere *hearers* and see'ers.

"Now, as I said in my last, as nature seems to have intended the same thing in you as in Garrick, no matter how short or how long, her kind intention must not be crossed. If it is she will tip the wink to Madam Fortune and you'll be kicked downstairs.

"Think on that, Master Ford.

"God bless you.

"T. G."

It can be seen from these capital letters that Gainsborough had a very high opinion of Henderson's promise and abilities as an actor, and that he saw in him great personal resemblance to Garrick. Both Garrick and Henderson are very much to be congratulated on such a redoubtable friend and champion as the great uncouth painter.

Henderson remained at Bath until the close of the season of 1776–7, getting enormous experience and adding, amongst many others, *Othello*, *Shylock*, *King John*, *Archer*, *Frost*, *Sir John Brute*, to a repertoire which increased at an alarming rate. So much so that Henderson, with unusual wisdom and common sense, implored Palmer to give him fewer characters and more time to study them in. He had overheard and admitted the justice of Garrick's remark to the effect that "he swallowed his parts like an eager glutton, and spewed his undigested fragments in the face of the audience."

Henceforward he was given a little more breathing space, and worked hard at his characters. His *Othello* was not a great success, but his *Falstaff* gradually improved until it became the greatest our stage has seen, with the possible exception of Quin.

In the interim between his Bath engagements he went up to London and rehearsed, recited and mimicked, in the hopes of getting an engagement, to Garrick, Harris, and Leake. But none followed, and he had to return to Bath disconsolate. At Bath his repertoire and his reputation alike increased. He was as much in request off the stage as he was on, being an acquisition to any party. He was always delighted to read, recite, or give imitations of the great Mr. Garrick. Reports of the last unwise proceeding reached the ears of Garrick, and cannot have improved Henderson's chances at Drury Lane. At another time Henderson had an interview with the redoubtable

Samuel Foote, who advised him to have nothing to do with tragedy, to stick to the sock and abjure the buskin. "The one is all nature, and the other all art and trick. Tragedy is mere theatrical bombast, the very fungus of the theatre," said the jealous Foote. Then Henderson was asked to give a taste of his quality, which he did, not without many interruptions from Foote. When he had finished and taken his leave Foote remarked to some one else who was present "that he would not do," thus confirming the opinions of the other managers, Garrick, Harris, Leake, and Colman. But Colman eventually altered his views, for on taking over the Haymarket from Foote in 1777 he offered Henderson an engagement, which was accepted, and our actor made his first appearance in the metropolis 11th June, 1777. Against his own wish, but in deference to Colman's, he played *Shylock*. The performance was a great success. Amongst those who complimented him afterwards was old Macklin. "And yet, sir, I never had the honour of seeing you play the part!" said Henderson. "Evidently not," growled Macklin, "or you would have played it very differently." Later on Garrick went to see him play, and his only remark was to commend the actor who played *Tubal!* The fact is, Garrick had never forgiven Henderson for his rashness in imitating him to his face. But Henderson was gradually learning wisdom, and refused the opportunity to play *Bayes* and introduce his imitations. But he was foolish and ill-advised enough, whilst partaking of Colman's hospitality, to imitate his host to his face and in the presence of his guests. This established a coolness between the two, and Henderson never played another season at the Haymarket. But the one season was immensely successful, Colman taking close upon £5000 during the thirty-six performances at which Henderson appeared. On the occasion of his benefit, when he was handed the account of expenses to be deducted it was made out for "no pounds, no shillings, and no pence," a piece of real generosity on Colman's part.

Most of the papers spoke very highly of Henderson, and he was subject to much fulsome flattery and adulations, mingled, fortunately perhaps, with exaggerated abuse from Garrick partisans, who seemed to think that it was impossible to praise one actor except at the expense of another. Amongst the important characters that he played this season were *Falstaff*, *Richard III*, and *Hamlet*. Garrick saw his *Hamlet* and characterized it as "a mixture of tragedy and comedy, pastoral, farce, and nonsense," which is surely exactly what *Hamlet* is.

The following winter Henderson accepted an offer from Sheridan to play at Drury Lane at a salary of £10 a week and a benefit. But before he could do so Palmer of Bath, to whom he was contracted, had to be "squared," and gave Henderson in exchange for the Bath rights of "*The School for Scandal*," a bargain that was a compliment to both the actor and the play. Henderson remained for two years at Drury Lane, during which he played all his old repertoire and added one or two new characters, of which the most noteworthy is *Æsop*. The version of "*Æsop's Fables*" was produced simply and solely to give him an opportunity of exhibiting his exceptional abilities at recitation and narration, abilities which even Garrick recognized.

At Drury Lane his *Hamlet* met with much criticism because he dared to venture omissions and commissions unauthorized by tradition or by the great Garrick.

He omitted to kick over the stool on seeing the ghost in the "Queen's Closet" scene. A traditional piece of business which Garrick had facilitated by having a specially rickety stool constructed. After "Look upon this picture and upon that," Henderson flung away the king's miniature in disgust, an innovation that was considered too violent for a man of his age and standing! The town was really quite upset about it! Pressure was brought to bear upon the reckless radical, and on the following night *Hamlet* kept possession of himself and the miniature. Again the captious critics carped. "If Henderson was right the first night he must consequently be wrong the second." It was further pointed out that just such little deviations as these led to heresies in religion, the abolition of order in civil government and the ultimate triumph of Satan!

When the two patent theatres joined forces in 1778 Henderson migrated to Covent Garden, when he first appeared on 5th October, 1778, as *Richard III.* He continued to play at that theatre until the close of his career, varying his London season with visits to the provinces, when he was almost invariably received enthusiastically as an actor and a man. His social triumphs were even more numerous than his artistic ones. At Dublin, where he was not at first very well patronized professionally, this was especially the case.

In Edinburgh he achieved a triumph as an actor, a man of learning, and a convivial companion. His appearance there in conjunction with Mrs. Siddons was too much for the strictest Scotsmen, and the theatre was crowded. His principal characters at Covent Garden in addition to those already named were *Prologue* and *Chorus* in "*Henry V*," *Iago*, a real triumph, *Macbeth*, which did not compare very favourably with Garrick, *Lear*, which was a failure, and *Sir Giles Overreach*. He played numberless other characters in the favourite plays of the time by Cumberland, Jephson, Massinger, and others. In Lent, 1785, he and Sheridan gave public readings in the Freemason's Hall, at which Henderson's recital of "John Gilpin" placed that worthy gentleman amongst the immortals.

The author's art had to be supplemented by the actor's, and Henderson was the jockey that rode "John Gilpin" into fame!

By this little experiment Henderson and Sheridan netted eight hundred pounds, in spite of being warned that their prices were too high.

The author, owner, or whoever pocketed the profits of "John Gilpin," did well too. One print-seller sold six thousand copies of the ballad, which had been lying unnoticed since its first appearance in print several years before.

There had been some little differences of opinion between Henderson and Harris of Drury Lane, but they were now adjusted, and Henderson renewed his engagement there for four years at a rising salary of from £17 to £20 per week, with benefits.

But his untimely death cut short the engagement. His last appearance on the stage was as *Horatius* in "*The Roman Father*" on 8th November, 1785. A few days afterwards he was seized with illness, which at first seemed to yield to medical treatment, but he suddenly collapsed and died at his house in Buckingham Street, Strand, on 25th November, 1785.

That is the account of his death, given by Ireland, his biographer. There is another more sensational version, which says that he was accidentally poisoned by his wife. As Ireland published his "Life" during her's, he may possibly have suppressed the true story. Whichever way it occurred, it occurred very much too soon, and at the early age of forty, with still ripening powers, the English stage lost one of its very brightest ornaments. He was buried in Westminster Abbey near Garrick, and his pall-bearers were Murphy, Malone, Steevens, Whitefoord, Hoole, and the Hon. John Byng. His wife, *née* Jane Figgins, of Chippenham, whom he had married in January, 1779, was buried beside him thirty-five years later. He left an infant daughter Harriet, the god-daughter of his biographer, John Ireland.

The year following his death his wife had a benefit at Covent Garden, Mrs. Siddons playing *Belvidera* in "*Venice Preserved*," to the *Jaffier* of Pope, for the occasion, thus showing, in the way he would have liked best, her gratitude for the high opinion of her powers, with which Henderson had always comforted her in her darkest hours. He first saw her, and believed in her, in the summer of 1776, at Birmingham, soon after she had been discharged from Drury Lane for incompetency.

Murphy wrote a prologue for the benefit, which Mrs. Siddons recited.

As an actor Henderson was in the very first rank, and was regarded by the public as second only to Garrick, who was undoubtedly jealous of him, and nervous of his own laurels.

In appearance Henderson laboured under many physical disadvantages, which no great actor should have in theory, but which many, indeed most of them, have had in practice. It is a curious fact, but of all the great English actors, only one, Spranger Barry, seems to have had exceptional physical advantages. Kean, Henderson, Cooke, Irving, Macready, all laboured under serious physical defects. Garrick, too, was small, though wonderfully graceful and good-looking.

But it is the soul of the actor, not his external appearance, that really counts, and Henderson is admitted, by nearly all who came in contact with him, to have had the mind and versatility of a genius. His versatility was seen not so much in the number of parts he played as in their variety. He had an analytical mind, and was not content merely to portray the external effect of some character, but analysed it carefully, and gave a finished portrait of his idea. His powers of mind completely overcame his insignificant appearance. Mrs. Siddons said that he was the soul of intelligence. *Hamlet* and *Falstaff*, *Iago*, *Macbeth*, *Sir Giles Overreach* were his best characters. He had a curious way of studying a new character. He first read the whole play in which it occurred, an excellent and, it is to be hoped, common practice with actors. He then learnt the part, a not very arduous undertaking for a man of his marvellous memory. After which he looked over the play once more and then laid it aside, never so much as glancing at it again before his first appearance in the character. On the evenings of these appearances he would be especially convivial and cheerful, dining, drinking, and playing cards up to the last possible moment. Acting on the advice of a friend, he once abandoned this habit, and before playing a new part dined quite alone and very frugally, as Garrick was in the habit of doing. The result was a very insipid, uninteresting performance, and henceforward Henderson returned to his old habits with their triumphant results.

He had not a very good voice, but he made up for its defects by magnificent elocution. He was an admirable reciter and reader, and is said to have been able to deliver a Shakespearean soliloquy better than any other actor before or since. He was a real Shakespearean actor, and seldom shone in the plays of any one else. With the turgid, trivial, popular tragedy of his own times he had little sympathy. He was a wonderful mimic, a good draughtsman, and wrote some humorous graceful verses, of which the following is a good example :—

"A RECEIPT FOR A PASTORAL.

"Take first two handfuls of wild thyme
Or any herb that suits your rhyme,
And shred it finely o'er your plains,
Fit to receive your rolling swains.
With crocus, violets, and daisies
Be sure to fill your vacant places ;
(Well water'd with celestial flowers)
And to avoid the critic's quarrel,
A sprig or two of Virgil's laurel.
Your ground thus laid, your trees thus placed,
Sweeten'd with flowers to your taste !
Your shepherd take, and as is wont
Baptize him at the poet's font !
Adorn him with scrip, crook, and reed
And lay him by for further need.
Then take a damsel neat and fair
And in a fillet bind her hair,
Give her a flock of tender sheep
And keep her by you—she will keep."

Not very high-class poetry, but neat and well turned. Henderson was, moreover, an omnivorous reader and a good and courageous critic of literature and acting. He had the courage to express a poor opinion of some of Pope's work, and the perspicuity to see the genius of Mrs. Siddons, when it seemed hidden from the rest of the world. In character he was, on the whole, steady and sane, though there was a time when his head came near being turned by the adulation he received, and he uttered the absurd dictum that an actor must be spoiled and flattered on and off the stage if he is to succeed. Others must do him more than justice, if he is to do himself justice!

As a companion and friend, he was delightful, generally in the best of spirits, though at times he would be very cast down and depressed. This was partly due to a certain kind of superstitious craving and love of the morbid in his nature. He was the sort of man to see spooks, and did see them. He was fond of telling a story of how one night, when he and his brother were quite young, and things were at their blackest, his mother, who was in the depths of despair, had wandered off alone. Night came on and still she did not return, so he and his brother went out to look for her, and were guided by what looked like a phantom to the brink of a lake, where they found her contemplating suicide.

Whether such an event happened in fact or not, it certainly did so in Henderson's fancy. One of his favourite pastimes was wandering about churchyards collecting epitaphs. On one occasion his efforts were rewarded by the following:—

"DR. GREENWOOD, HIS EPITAPH ON HIS WIFE.

"Ah, Death! Ah, Death! thou hast cut down
The fairest *Green wood* in all this town;
Her virtues and her good qualities are such
She was worthy to marry a lord or a judge;
Yet such was her condescension, and such her humility,
She chose to marry me, a Doctor in divinity.
For this heroic deed she stands confest
Above all others the phœnix of her sex;
And like that bird one young she did beget
That she might not leave her sex disconsolate.
My grief for her loss is so very sure
I can only write two lines more.
For this and every other good woman's sake
Never let a blister be put on a lying-in woman's back"!!!!

He himself wrote an epitaph, that is to say an impromptu, on Garrick's funeral, which was in the worst possible taste and the worst possible poetry.

Perhaps, who knows, his curious, morbid, superstitious traits may have helped him in *Macbeth*, and his large appetite and convivial disposition may have influenced his admirable *Falstaff!*

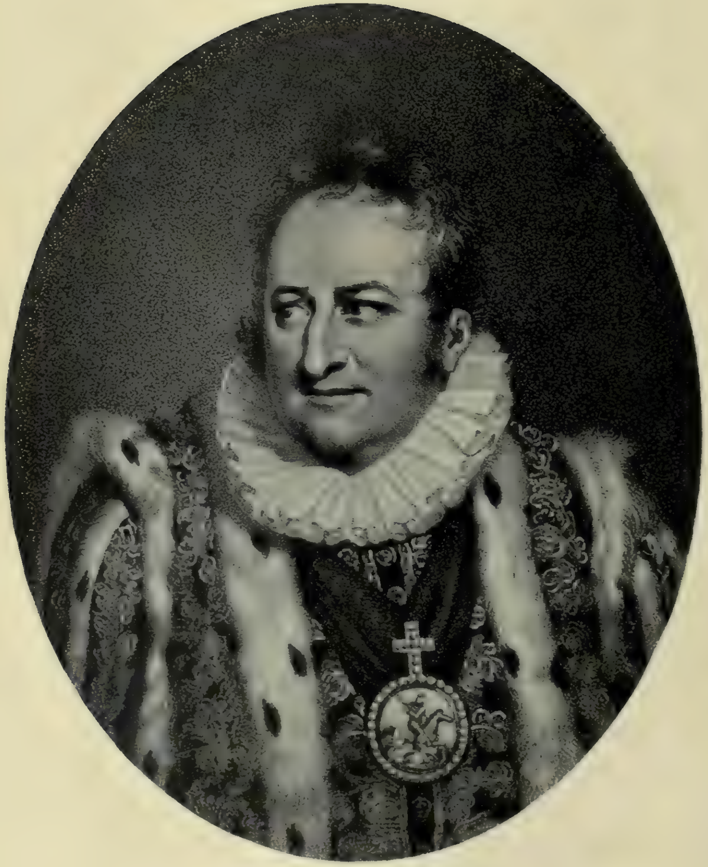
He seems to have had the reputation also of being a little near in money matters, which probably only means that he understood well the value of money. He had learned it in a hard school. Perhaps it was not so, and that neither *Shylock*, *Falstaff*, nor *Macbeth*, three of his greatest triumphs, were as far removed from his own nature as they are from each other. He was certainly a very singular and interesting personage; and upon one point every one, with the possible exception of Garrick, seems to have agreed, namely that he was a very great actor.

GEORGE FREDERICK COOKE

1756–1811

ALTHOUGH he was ostensibly before the public as an actor for thirty-five years, the story of G. F. Cooke is soon told, not more than half of it being fit for telling. His chequered career resembled that of his great successor, Edmund Kean. He was born, according to his own account, at Westminster, on 17th April, 1756. Other accounts state that he was born in barracks, in Ireland, the illegitimate son of an officer. He was certainly generally regarded as an Irishman. According, again, to his own account, his father died very soon after his birth, and his widow and her son went to live in Berwick, where the boy was sent to school. Theatrical travelling companies would occasionally visit the town, and Cooke saw his first play, "*The Provoked Husband*," played by one of them. His love for the drama, already kindled by reading "*Venice Preserved*," became from that moment the main interest of his life, unless, indeed, that was drink.

This performance of "*The Provoked Husband*" occurred about 1767. His mother had died, and he was living with two aunts whose interest in the drama was, to say the least of it, negligible. Somehow young George succeeded in getting hold of some copies of plays and theatrical prints, which were all eagerly perused. The result was amateur performances of



G. F. COOKE AS "RICHARD III."

"*The Fair Penitent*" and "*Hamlet*," in both of which Cooke played *Horatio*. On one occasion, when the Edinburgh players came to play "*Macbeth*" in Berwick, Cooke, unable to "raise the wind," concealed himself in the theatre before the play began, hoping to be able to creep into the audience unobserved. He chose as his hiding-place a barrel, which unfortunately turned out to be the "thunder barrel." Cooke did not understand the use of the one or two cannon-balls lying in the bottom of it, until he found himself being rolled about with them. Whoever did the rolling must have been startled at the unwonted sounds mingling with the thunder. As soon as Cooke left school he was apprenticed to one John Taylor, a printer, but either he broke out or got out of his indentures, for in November, 1771, we find him going to London and thence to Holland, probably as a cabin-boy. In 1772 he was back at Berwick, and in 1774 returned to London, when he went the round of the theatres and saw the great Garrick in all his principal characters; also Barry and Macklin. He saw the latter play *Iago* and *Sir Archy McSarcasm*, in which he himself afterwards shone. With the assistance of a friend, as stage-struck as himself, Cooke made his first appearance on the professional stage two years later, just about the time Garrick was giving his farewell performances. Exit Garrick, enter Cooke! He "entered" in the character of *Dumont* in "*Jane Shore*" at Brentford in the spring of 1776. The theatre was really only a large room in a public-house. Actors and actresses all dressed in the same room, as in Hogarth's print of "Strollers Dressing." The following night at the same theatre he made quite a success as *Ensign Dudley* in the "*West Indian*." Next we hear of him visiting Berwick and Edinburgh, and later on joining a company at Hastings under one Standen, an actor-manager who was stone deaf! The leading comedian of the company was an old woman of seventy, and no bad comedian either. During this tour he fell ill and returned to London, where, in the spring of 1778, he made his first appearance as a London actor. This was at the Haymarket, when he played *Castalio* in "*The Orphan*" in the "off" season, following this up with one or two more appearances, always in the slack season.

He also appeared at a place known as China-Hall, and played the night it was burnt down. At another time he played at the Tennis Court, Borough, which was soon closed by order of the Surrey magistrates. He then toured about the provinces, becoming quite a favourite in many places. In 1779 he was a member of Fisher's company at Sudbury in Suffolk. From February, 1780, to October, 1781, he was absolutely lost sight of. No one ever knew what happened to him during those months. From 1781 to 1783 he was on tour in the Midlands, acting very finely, but beginning already to show signs of violent dissipation. 1784 is a very important year in his life. On the 2nd of January he appeared in Manchester, under the management of Miller, as *Philatos* in the "*Grecian Daughter*" of Murphy. In this he made an enormous success, and henceforward became a settled favourite on the Northern circuit, especially at Newcastle, Liverpool and York. At Newcastle the audience quite lost their heads over him. He now worked very hard at his profession and at reading. He would devour every book and play that came his way. When sober and in his right senses he was a brilliant and trustworthy actor and a delightful companion, but when the drink fiend got hold of him he became a wild beast, absenting himself for sometimes months at a time in the lowest and most infamous haunts in whatever town he happened to be. But he was such a fine actor that managers always forgave him and were only too ready to welcome him back to their fold. 1794 was another eventful year for Cooke, for on the 19th November he appeared for the first time in Dublin, under Hitchcock, as *Othello.* He was an enormous success and at once became the rage. *Othello* was followed by *Macbeth*, *Shylock*, *Richard*, *Zanga*, in all of which he advanced his reputation. Then suddenly on the 3rd March, 1795, he left the theatre and absolutely disappeared from view until he turned up in 1796 at Southampton, when he was recognized by Maxwell, manager of the Portsmouth Theatre. His mad behaviour in Dublin had culminated in his enlisting as a soldier, but when his regiment was ordered to the West Indies he was not allowed to go with them on account of sickness. He now wished to get his discharge, and Messrs. Banks and Ward, his managers at Manchester, purchased it for him. Some weeks later Maxwell was requested by a boy in his employ at the theatre to go and see "a poor sick man, sir, who has been a soldier, sir, and is lying at my mother's and begs to see you before he dies, sir." Maxwell went to the place, a low tavern, and found Cooke practically dying of starvation and exposure. Banks and Ward had, after purchasing his discharge, sent him the wherewithal to join them in Manchester, but he had drunk it all, sickness had ensued, and he had been ashamed to apply to them again. He had just managed to crawl from Southampton to Portsmouth. Maxwell then took him in hand and got into communication with Banks and Ward. It was then arranged that Maxwell should put him in the coach for London, just giving him enough money to pay his expenses thither; at London he was to be met by a friend of Banks and Ward, and by him personally conducted to Manchester, where his reappearance was being much advertised. On the night he was expected to do so he had not yet arrived in Manchester. Nor did he arrive that night, and a huge audience were disappointed. In spite of all the precautions that were taken to prevent it he succeeded in being late; but a few nights later, when he at last appeared and played *Octavian* in "*The Mountaineers*," the audience readily forgave his behaviour in their raptures at his glorious acting. From Manchester he went to Shrewsbury, and thence to Liverpool, where he appeared as *Sir Edmund Mortimer* in "*The Iron Chest*." Later he was at Chester, where he was married in 1796 to Miss Alicia Daniels of the Chester Theatre. In November he was in Dublin playing *Iago* and appearing as *Shylock*, and speaking an address at the opening of the new Crow Street Theatre Royal. Later he played the *Stranger*, and the following year supported John Philip Kemble when he visited Ireland. During one of the performances Kemble is said to have reproached Cooke for being imperfect in his part. This Cooke flatly denied, adding: "And damn me, Black Jack, if I don't make you tremble in your pumps one of these days yet!"—which he did! Evidently his wife soon had quite enough of him, for she left him and a good engagement at the Dublin Theatre and returned to England. The marriage was afterwards declared null and void, in July, 1801, on the application of Mrs. Cooke.

Cooke remained in Ireland, varying his Dublin appearance with visits to Cork and Limerick. On the whole his Irish engagement was a long and successful one, but it was chequered with recklessness, drunkenness and debt. Once when drunk he challenged an adversary, who refused on principle to fight a rich man, whereupon Cooke drew notes to the value of some hundred pounds from his pocket-book and threw them on the fire, saying: "Now I owe nothing. We are equal. Come on!" In June, 1800, Cooke received from Lewis, acting on Harris's part, the offer of an engagement at Covent Garden. He accepted, and on 31st October, 1801, he made his first appearance as *Richard III.*

His success was immediate and unqualified, and it was seen at once that he was the greatest exponent of the character since Garrick. "Black Jack Kemble" was amongst the audience, and fulfilled Cooke's prophecy by trembling in his shoes, though he must have seen that there were certain characters in which Cooke could never rival him. *Richard III* was followed by *Shylock*, in which Cooke proved himself a worthy successor to Macklin. Later he played *Sir Archy McSarcasm* in "*Love à la Mode*," with which he henceforward always preceded *Shylock*, as Macklin had before him. *Iago*, *Macbeth*, *Kitely*, the *Stranger*, and *Sir Giles Overreach* followed, in every one of which, excepting the *Stranger* and possibly *Macbeth*, he completely eclipsed John Kemble, and established a supremacy which lasted during his lifetime and until Kean came on the scenes. As *Kitely*, Cooke admitted that he owed some of his success to Garrick, whom he had seen play the character. *The Stranger* he played for his benefit, and came badly out of the comparison with

Kemble, but the management were so pleased with his work during the season that they remitted him the charges on his benefit, a gift worth more than £130. On 15th June he brought his first Covent Garden season to a brilliant close with *Richard III*, which he had played twenty-three times.

It had been a splendid season for Cooke, who was now forty-five years of age. He had been steady and sober throughout, owing, doubtless, to his success and removal from his old evil companions. But, unfortunately, he was soon to be amongst them again. After a most successful tour in the provinces, and in Glasgow and Edinburgh, triumphing everywhere, and adding his splendid impersonation of *Sir Pertinax McSycophant* to his other characters, he went with a "small, undisciplined set" to Newcastle, and was playing there on 14th September, the very night when he was advertised to appear at Covent Garden as *Richard III*, in opposition to Kemble. He did not turn up in London until more than a month later. A crowded house had waited for his appearance at Covent Garden, and the manager had had to apologize to them and substitute "*Lovers' Vows*" for "*Richard III*."

The public were thus done out of not only this performance, but also the duel of the two Richards, which had raised great expectations. Cooke arrived in London on 15th October, and no sooner had he entered his apartment than he received a visit from Mr. Harris, chief manager and proprietor of Covent Garden. Over what happened at that interview Cooke, in his diary, draws a veil, as he does over most things not to his credit.

He made his reappearance on 19th October, 1802, and prefaced his labours by a public apology, which was accepted by the audience. The power of his acting may be gauged from the fact that both proprietors and public so often overlooked his conduct. They soon had a good deal to put up with in London, for Cooke now began to play similar tricks to those he had been in the habit of doing in the provinces. He appeared in London more or less regularly each season until 1810, varying his metropolitan engagements with provincial tours and flying tours to Bath, then under the management of Elliston. When sober he kept a fairly regular diary, and from it we gather that he was studious, hard-working, and a sound critic, but whenever there is anything detrimental to be recorded, the diary comes to a full stop, and is not resumed again until "after the event." On the 8th January, 1802, he appeared for the first time as *Lear*, and was a qualified success. On 10th April following, he made a great success with Macklin's *Sir Pertinax McSycophant*, a character that many thought had been buried with its author; but Cooke resurrected it. He and Macklin seem to have had very much in common. On 11th May he was to have played *Orsino* in a now dead and gone play, by one M. S. Lewis, called "*Alfonso, King of Castile*," but he was too indisposed, i.e. drunk, to go on with his part.

The following September he played *Hamlet* and was a failure, only repeating the performance once. His *Falstaff* was likewise not very successful, as he himself admits. It had now become apparent that he was an actor of somewhat limited range, but *facile princeps* in that range, until Edmund Kean appeared on the scenes. Villains were his line—high-class, hypocritical, ferocious villains. *Sir Pertinax*, *Iago*, *Richard III*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, and *Shylock* were a fine portrait gallery of blackguards. May, 1803, added another to them. *King John*, who was voted quite worthy to rank with the other beauties. Before the performance Cooke had to make a public apology. A few nights previously he had been hissed off the stage, and the curtain dropped on *Love à la Mode*. These apologies now became things of fairly frequent occurrence, and his references to "indisposition" or "his old complaint" were received with roars of laughter and ironical applause. At Drury Lane he appears to have played *Coriolanus* for the benefit of an actor called Raymond, but not for his own, as he was a failure in the part and never played it again. When Kemble came to Covent Garden, Cooke would sometimes support him and Mrs. Siddons, and more than once, even on those great occasions, was seized with his old complaint. On 4th December, 1804, he played *Ganalvon* to the *Norval* of Master Betty. Kemble and Mrs. Siddons had wisely retired till the Betty craze was over, but the improvident Cooke had nothing to retire on but "seconds" to the young Roscius. In 1804 he spent some time in Appleby jail, for debt, and kept a journal, and, according to his accounts of prison life, he had been in many worse places. Covent Garden was burnt down in 1808, whilst he was away on tour. On his return he appeared with the burnt-out company at the Opera House, Haymarket, and also the Haymarket Theatre, thus revisiting the scenes of his first London appearances. He brought back with him from this tour a new wife, formerly a Miss Lamb, of Newark. The public were now beginning to get a little tired of Cooke and his tricks. Critics and lampoon-writers began to assail him on all sides. He attempted to play during the O. P. riots, and was loudly cheered, not so much because he was Cooke as because he wasn't Kemble! The audience hung out a placard, on which was the doubtful compliment:

> *Cooke deserves our pity,*
> *Kemble our contempt.*

It should really have been the other way round, for Cooke most certainly did deserve their contempt and was rapidly getting it. He repeatedly broke faith with the public, not only on the frequent occasions when he was drunk, but also on the rarer ones when he was sober; for he would sometimes take it into his head, quite casually, not to play on some night for which he was advertised, and go off and hide himself in some low haunt till a different play was substituted. He delighted in harassing and annoying John Kemble. One night when *Richard III* was announced, having had his costume secretly conveyed to his lodging the night before, he dressed there and, repairing to the theatre, hid himself until Kemble was on the point of apologizing to the audience and offering to play *Richard* himself. Then Cooke stepped forward and played the part as well as he had ever done. He certainly must have been very good, or the managers would never have stood him as long as they did. But it was soon to come to an end, as far as London was concerned. On either the 5th or 22nd June, 1810, he made his last appearance in the metropolis, as either *Falstaff* or *Henry VIII*, in either of which he was a failure, and glad the managers must have been to see his back. He went straight to Liverpool, where he met Thomas Cooper, a famous American actor playing in England and trying to pick up good actors and actresses for "the other side." He approached Cooke, and a verbal agreement was made, which was ratified by a written one a month or so later. But Cooper had the greatest difficulty in clinching the matter, as Cooke never answered a letter, and was only to be found, as often as not, in places where Cooper refused to meet him. But matters were finally settled. Cooke had pretended that he was quite free of all engagements, but, as a matter of fact, he was bound to more than one management, including Covent Garden, for the forthcoming season. Moreover, he was surrounded by a gang of blood-suckers and spongers, who were in the habit of relieving him of his substantial earnings, and who would do their best to prevent him leaving the country. So he had to be smuggled aboard the lugger, so to speak, for all the world like a heroine of romance. Of course he was no sooner gone than a hue and cry was raised, and more than one management pretended to regret him. Cooper was even accused of enticing him away when drunk. As he was now never sober that was quite possible. He embarked at Liverpool on the *Columbia* on 4th October, 1810, and celebrated his last look at old England in his usual manner. Sea-sickness followed, and when he was himself again, his companions had tactfully drunk every drop of stimulant on board. So he was faced with a month's total abstinence, which did him no end of good, and he arrived in New York on 10th November in splendid condition for his first appearance, which took place, as *Richard III*, on 16th November, 1810. He was as nervous as a debutante, but a packed house gave him a rousing reception and he achieved the greatest triumph of his career.

But he was a very few days in America before he reverted to his old habits, and on his third appearance was so drunk that he could scarcely be heard. Nevertheless the season was phenomenally successful. His manager, Price, after his first experience of Cooke's little ways, invited him to live in his own house and under his supervision, a truly noble precaution which did not avail the poor manager much. From New York, Cooke went to Boston, Philadelphia, and other northern cities, repeating his successes and excesses. When in his cups he was very fond of dilating upon his exploits in the American war, having been present, according to his own account, at the battle of Bunker's Hill. This occurred during the hiatus in 1780–1, so there is some possibility that he might have done so. In any case, if he was *not* there, he made out a very good case for himself, and his descriptions of his experiences certainly tallied with facts. In July, 1811, he married his third wife, Mrs. Behn, who was the most successful of the three, remaining by his side and nursing him until his death, which took place at the Mechanics' Hall, 26th September, 1811. His last appearance in New York was made the 22nd June as *Sir Pertinax McSycophant;* his last appearance on any stage, at Providence, Rhode Island, on 30th June, 1811, as *Sir Giles Overreach.* Dropsy, brought on by his manner of living, was the cause of his death. He was fifty-five years old. He was buried on the day following, in the presence of an enormous gathering, in the strangers' corner of the cemetery of St. Paul's Church. Nine years later Edmund Kean, who had unbounded admiration for his genius, got permission to have the remains moved to another part of the cemetery, and erected a monument over them, on which we may read that:

> "Three kingdoms claim his birth,
> Both hemispheres pronounce his worth!"

There is a legend that his body was disinterred, and his skull is in the possession of a private collector to this day, but Kean found some remains.

He declared very solemnly on his death-bed that he was born at Westminster. Shortly before his death he received a letter from Harris begging him to return to Covent Garden.

As a man, the less said of Cooke the better. In addition to his excesses and intemperance he was a vain, quarrelsome brute, with an inordinate opinion of his own importance. He generally alluded to himself very pompously as "George Frederick Cooke." He was fond of pompous and high-falutin language, especially when in his cups, when he would address his adversaries in Mosaic and sometimes still more exalted phrases. If his audience did not think sufficiently of him he would not hesitate to tell them then and there what he thought of them. He once told a Liverpool audience that "there was not a brick in their houses that was not cemented by the blood of a fellow-creature," very impressive! He kept a diary—of his virtues! He was generous with his money, and curiously enough succeeded in dying with plenty of it in his possession. He was a fine critic, and did not attempt to spare himself when he considered he had failed. He also freely acknowledged his debt to other great actors whom he had seen. This frankness was one of the best traits in a nature where good ones were scarce.

As an actor and an artist he belongs to the very highest rank. He is best compared to Macklin and Edmund Kean. Greater than the former, but not so great as the latter. His range, as we have seen, was limited to what are called unsympathetic parts, but in that range he excelled all his contemporaries. *Sir Pertinax*, *Richard III*, and *Shylock* were his three greatest rôles. As *Sir Pertinax* he excelled the original author himself. When sober and in his right senses he took great care and pains with his art. He had a fine appearance, with powerful and expressive features. His arms and his voice were his weak points. The former were too short, and the latter was too harsh and grating, and often pitched in too high a key. He brought new life and force to the stage at a time when, under Kemble, it was inclined to return to the pre-Garrick artificial days.

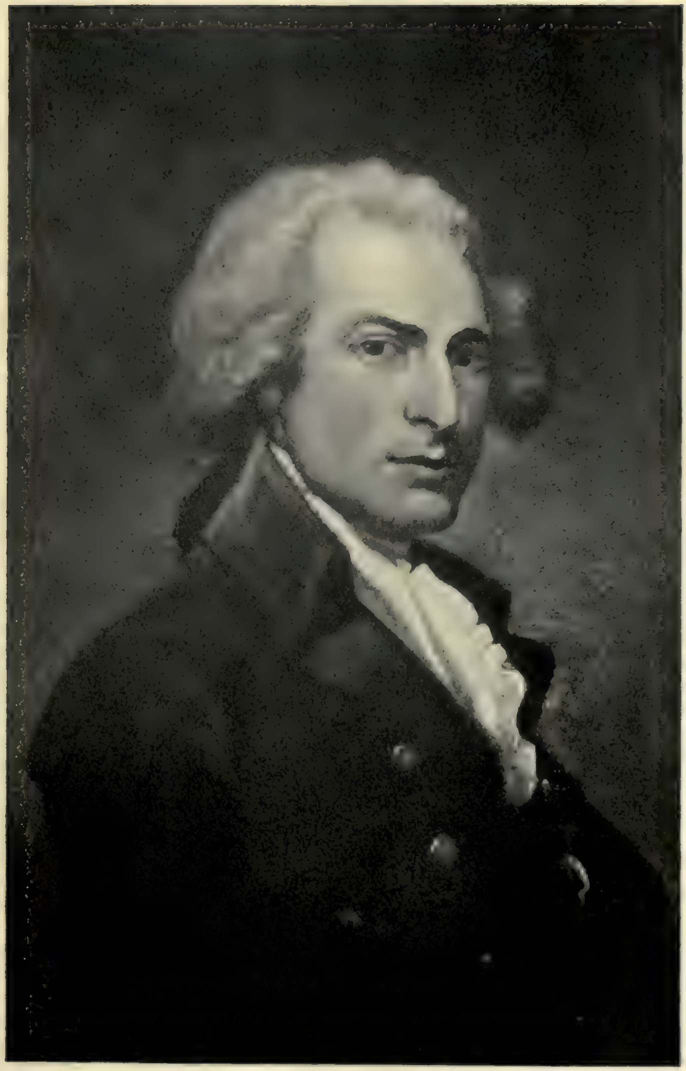
After Edmund Kean he is probably the most intense and forcible actor the English stage has ever possessed. He and Kean had many excellent points in common, and one very sad one. But whilst Kean often rose to greater heights than Cooke it is doubtful if he ever sank to quite such depths.

Cooke was certainly one of our greatest actors, and excited enormous enthusiasm during his stormy and fitful career.

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE

1757–1823

JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE was born at Prescot, Lancashire, 1st February, 1757. He was the ~~eldest son, and the~~ second of twelve children, the majority of whom found their way on to the stage. The eldest, Sarah, attained immortal fame as probably the greatest English actress that has yet appeared. John Philip reigned for many years as undisputed monarch of the stage, until his throne was shaken by G. F. Cooke and taken by Edmund Kean. Of the other children—Fanny, Charles, and Stephen—all achieved some measure of fame, the first with her pen, as well as with her powder and paints. Roger Kemble, the father of the family, was a conscientious old actor and catholic of very good descent. He married Sarah, daughter of John Ward, a theatrical manager, who had serious objections to his daughter marrying an actor, but consoled himself with the thought that Roger Kemble never was and never would be one. From their mother, who was a somewhat remarkable woman, and the daughter of a very remarkable man, what afterwards came to be known as the striking Kemble strain was probably inherited. She was an Irish Protestant, and from her they got the dash of Irish blood which seems to be almost an essential ingredient of a great actor's recipe.



JOHN PHILIP KEMBLE.

Her daughters were brought up in their mother's faith, and her sons in their father's.

As a child of ten John Philip played some parts in his father's company, notably the *Duke of York* in Havard's "*Charles I*," when his sister Sarah was the *Princess Elizabeth.* This was in February, 1767. The following April he made another appearance in Dryden's version of the "*Tempest*," and in November of the same year he was sent to a Roman Catholic school at Sedgley Park in Staffordshire, where he was expected to begin preparing himself for the priesthood. He remained there four years, and then went to the English Catholic College at Douay. There he was noted for his wonderful memory and ability to declaim Greek and Latin. Two stories of the former are worth recording. At one time he laid and won a wager that, after a few days' study, he would repeat the contents of a newspaper by heart, including the advertisements. At another, his class, being detected in some prank, were condemned to learn by heart two books of Homer. On the principle of the vicarious atonement one of their number was expected to undertake the punishment. John Philip at once volunteered, and learned and repeated in an incredibly short time some 1500 lines of Homer.

Athough he applied himself diligently to his books and studied carefully the Lives of the Saints and Fathers of the Church, he had no intention of becoming a priest, and told his father as much, announcing, withal, his fixed determination to become an actor. This so upset the old gentleman that he refused to assist his son's endeavours in any way, who thereupon sought the aid of sister Sarah. Through her instrumentality he was admitted a member of the provincial company of one Chamberlain, and made his debut on 8th January, 1776, as *Theodosius* in Lee's tragedy of the same name. He is said to have chosen the part on account of its flowery speeches, but the audiences much preferred *Bajazet*, which was his next character.

There then followed a tour in the midland counties, during which he was often hissed by his audiences.

At the same time he was working very hard and very assiduously at improving and educating himself, a thing he continued to do up to the day of his retirement and after. His life was very hard. He experienced the usual unmitigated hardships of a struggling strolling player. At one time we hear of a landlady taking his only shirt as a hostage for rent due, at another he is whipping a humming-top over the head of a sick landlord, with the hoped-for result that he is turned out into the street, for this time he himself was the hostage. At Cheltenham we hear of his giving a lecture on eloquence, assisted by a conjurer, as comic relief. At Liverpool he comes out as an author with a tragedy called "*Belisarius*," which, in spite of some success in the provinces, never came to London.

In these days he was slovenly, and untidy in his personal appearance, very unlike the great, grand and correct tragedian he afterwards became. His circumstances were improved a little by his engagement by Tate Wilkinson for the York circuit. He made his first appearance under him at Wakefield in October, 1778, as *Captain Plume*. Then on the 30th of the same month, he appeared at Hull as *Macbeth*. His performance was thought by many to be promising. Then "*Belisarius*" was revived with complete success, and on 19th January, 1779, he appeared as *Orestes*, followed by *Ranger* and *Edward the Black Prince*. Then he again came out as an author, this time of a farce, really an adaptation, called "*The Female Officer*." We also hear of his producing his own version of the "*Comedy of Errors*" under the absurd and, as it turned out, prophetic, title of "*Oh, it's impossible*." In this adaptation he turned the two *Dromios* into niggers! He also had his first experience of a theatre riot during his York engagement. One night he was supporting an actress called Mrs. Mason in *Zenobia*, when the performance was interrupted by the loud talking of a fashionable lady in one of the boxes. Kemble stopped acting and refused to resume until the chatterbox stopped. In a flash the theatre was divided into two camps, the supporters of Kemble and the supporters of the lady. The latter demanded an apology, which Kemble absolutely refused. The rioters continued to try to stop the performances that and a few subsequent nights, but in the end Kemble's dignity and good sense triumphed. His engagement under Tate Wilkinson lasted until the end of 1781, during which time he played parts of such extremes as *Hamlet*, *Sir Giles Overreach* and *Puff*. He also appeared as a poet and a lecturer. As a poet he wrote an excellent blank-verse Ode to the husband of his friend Mrs. Inchbald. He also wrote some Latin verses, things in which he revelled, for Inchbald's grave.

He played comedy and tragedy, but tragedy was his forte. Towards the end of 1781 he went over to Ireland and appeared in Dublin at the Smock Alley Theatre, with great success as *Hamlet*. Daly, the manager, congratulated himself on his acquisition, to whom he paid the magnificent salary of £5 a week.

This was more, however, than Kemble had ever earned before. *Hamlet* was followed by *Sir George Touchwood* in "*The Belle's Stratagem*," which was a failure. The part was utterly and entirely unsuited to his powers. He recovered some of his lost ground in *Alexander the Great*. Then he appeared in another new character, the *Count of Narbonne*, a play adapted by Robert Jephson from Walpole's romance, "*Castle of Otranto*." The author himself attended the rehearsals, and was delighted with Kemble, introducing him to all his noble friends and inviting him everywhere. Kemble, who was rapidly becoming an extremely polished, presentable man, delighted, and was delighted with, every one. He remained in Ireland for two years. In 1782 Miss Younge, who had charmed Walpole with her performance in London of the *Countess of Narbonne*, came over to Dublin and played with him. Amongst his many characters the *Count* was very much the favourite. Subsequently he went with the lady to Cork, where he opened in *Hamlet* and played other favourite characters, but did not altogether succeed in banishing the memories of Mossop and Barry. The company then went on to Limerick, and finally returned to Dublin, where Kemble sometimes played "seconds" to West Digges. During Kemble's Irish tour he was supported at times by different leading ladies, Miss Younge, Mrs. Montague, Mrs. Inchbald, his great friend, Mrs. Crawford, once the wife of the brilliant Spranger Barry; and Miss Phillips, afterwards Mrs. Crouch. This young lady's name was, at one time, romantically associated with Kemble's, but it was no more and no less than a very genuine friendship, beginning with a somewhat romantic adventure.

Miss Phillips was a very respectable young lady, and accustomed to being escorted home after the theatre by her papa. One night that gentleman was laid up with the gout, and sent a request that Kemble would see his daughter safely home. But it so happened that the same evening a lot of young officers determined that one of their number should act as the young lady's escort. They all lined up outside her dressing-room door and contended loudly amongst themselves as to who should be the lucky man. Miss Phillips locked herself in her dressing-room, and was afraid to come out. Then Kemble appeared upon the scene, drew his sword, and escorted her through the ranks of the officers, threatening to give instant satisfaction to any one who would attempt to molest her.

This little adventure of course set tongues wagging, but nothing further came of it. Kemble, to his last day, always spoke most feelingly and tenderly of the beautiful Miss Phillips and his admiration for her. There seems to be some evidence that Kemble did a tour with his great sister, Mrs. Siddons, during his Irish engagement, and that then plans were made for his appearance in London. Whether it was so or not, on 30th September, 1783, he made his first appearance at Drury Lane in and as *Hamlet*. His derformance, if it did not exactly create the wild enthusiasm of Garrick's, and subsequently Kean's, first metropolitan appearance, certainly roused an enormous amount of interest, and caused endless discussion and controversy amongst the critics, both excellent things for a play or an actor.

His noble appearance, and the ease and grace with which he moved and wore his clothes, were all very much in his favour. He had a good voice, not yet marred by the mannerisms which he afterwards fell into, or the unfortunate asthmatic wheeze which so often assailed him in later life. Many of his new readings, which caused much comment at the time, were eventually accepted and became traditionally connected with the parts. On the whole his *Hamlet* seems to have been a very dignified, painstaking performance, thoroughly characteristic of the man, and possibly indicative of a coming reaction to the old order of things that existed before the tempestuous reforms of David Garrick.

Theatre etiquette was a very strict thing in those days, and so Kemble was not able to play many leading parts his first season, most of them being bespoken by other actors. He played about a dozen parts altogether, the principal of which were, in addition to *Hamlet: Richard III*, *Sir Giles Overreach*, *King John*, and *Shylock*. Audiences were pleased with his *Richard III*, which was quieter than Garrick's, and some said subtler, but it is hard to believe it. His *Sir Giles* was not so good as Henderson's was considered to have been. The great *Sir Giles* was yet to appear in Edmund Kean. *King John* was probably the best of Kemble's impersonations, after *Hamlet*. It did not altogether satisfy the critics, who said it was artificial and cold. But it set them talking, hard. He was supported by—perhaps one should say he supported—his matchless sister Mrs. Siddons as *Constance*, and the performance was given at the request of their Majesties, who wished to see brother and sister together. The great physical resemblance between the two was eagerly remarked by the audience, but it was also felt that John Philip could not quite rise to the sublime tragic heights or sound the profound depths that his sister could.

From now till 1788 Kemble was regularly engaged at Drury Lane in the capacity of second "lead." The position of "lead" belonged by prescriptive right to the famous "Gentleman Smith." But Kemble had his opportunities and made the most of them. Moreover, he had plenty of spare time, during which he assiduously continued to study his parts, which improved with each new reading. He generally supported his great sister. On 8th March, 1785, he appeared as *Othello* to her *Desdemona*. His performance appears to have been excellent, without being any way inspired. But her *Desdemona* was an inspiration. Hitherto the character had usually been looked upon and rendered as a somewhat insipid miss, but Mrs. Siddons, while abating nothing of its charm and tenderness, brought out to the full the force of character necessary for *Desdemona* to have taken such a step as marrying *Othello*. On 31st March, 1785, he was permitted to play *Macbeth* to her matchless *Lady Macbeth*. Kemble's *Macbeth* showed deep thought and study and was much applauded, but after this performance he had to resign the part again into the hands of Smith.

On 18th February, 1786, he played *Orlando* and produced his own farce of "*Projects*." *Orlando* was very much more successful than the farce, which has never been printed. 8th March, 1787, he appeared for the first time in London in his old Dublin success, Jephson's "*Count of Narbonne*," and on the following 14th April made a huge success as *Mentevole* in the same author's tragedy of "*Julia*." But in spite of his own personal success the play was only acted once that season, and never became very popular. On 26th October, 1787, he again came out as an author, or rather an adapter, in a prose adaptation of Fletcher's "*Pilgrim*." Vanbrugh's version had generally been acted before this, and Kemble's did not do much to upset its popularity.

The following 8th December he was married to Priscilla, widow of an actor called Brereton, and daughter of Garrick's famous prompter, Hopkins. The description of Kemble's courtship and wooing is delicious. "Pop!" said he, coming off the stage one day, as he chucked her under the chin, "I shouldn't be surprised if you were soon to hear of something to your advantage!" "Pop" wondered what he meant, and was a sufficiently unsophisticated widow to consult her mamma. "He means business," said that lady. "It is his way of 'popping' the question!" A day or two afterwards Pop and Phil were married. They did not quite know what to do with themselves after the ceremony, and their friends the Bannisters suggested a little dinner-party at the Bannister home in Frith Street. Thither they went, and after dinner Mrs. Kemble went off to play her part in the "*West Indian*." After the play Kemble called for her and took her to a new home he had prepared for her in Caroline Street, Bedford Square.

The next night the marriage was publicly announced, when Mrs. Brereton appeared on the programme for the first time as Mrs. Kemble, playing *Lady Anne* to the *Richard* of Smith.

There were rumours at the time that the marriage was one of convenience, at any rate on Mrs. Kemble's part, who had, it was said, been handsomely squared by a certain nobleman whose daughter had formed a dangerous attachment to the actor. But the story lacks confirmation. Whether true or not, Mrs. Kemble made her husband an admirable wife. As an actress she seems to have been useful and ornamental, rather than inspired.

On 21st January, 1788, Kemble played *Lear* to Mrs. Siddons' *Cordelia*, for her benefit. It was a record night. The receipts amounted to nearly £350, and Kemble greatly enhanced his now rapidly growing reputation. His *Lear* was a fitting result of the hard and studious work he had been doing, and if it did not quite create the furore Garrick's had done, showed that the stage was in possession of another great actor. The following April he appeared as *Benedick* to the *Beatrice* of Miss Farren. What his performance may have lacked in humour it certainly made up in grace and dignity. On 5th May he appeared as *Antony* in "*Love for Love*," or "*All for Love*," to the *Cleopatra* of Mrs. Siddons. The following season Kemble undertook the management of the theatre. King had previously been manager, but more in name than in fact. Kemble issued a manifesto to the public to the effect that he was under no "humiliating restrictions." It soon became obvious that reform was to be the order of the day, and stage reform to begin with. The productions were carefully dressed, new prompt copies were carefully annotated and corrected in Kemble's clear handwriting. Old conventions were ruthlessly sacrificed, if unsatisfactory to his scholarly mind. He also announced and soon proved his intention of depending upon the drawing powers of a company of all-round excellence, quite as much as upon that of any particular star. At the same time he intended to take the opportunity given him by Smith's retirement of playing some big parts. He was, of course, depending upon his sister for leading lady. He opened his season with "*The Provoked Husband*," in which he played *Lord Townley* very finely.

Other plays followed, and on 25th November, 1788, he produced "*Henry VIII*," with Mrs. Siddons as *Queen Katherine*, and himself doubling the parts of *Cromwell* and *Griffith*. He is said to have done this for his sister's sake, feeling that he should like to be by her side in the two great scenes of Queen Katherine's trial and death, and also that in this subordinate position he could better superintend the processions and crowd effects, upon which he spent infinite pains and trouble. He first appeared as *Wolsey* on the 29th April, 1789. Other important parts that he played this season were *Norval*, *Zanga*, *Coriolanus*, *Petruchio*, *Macbeth*, *Norfolk* in St. John's "*Mary Queen of Scots*," in which Mrs. Siddons, of course, played the title-rôle. Of these *Coriolanus* and *Wolsey* were the best, both of them showing promise of the fine performances they were one day to become. Indeed, *Coriolanus* afterwards became his greatest part.

Throughout the season it became apparent that Kemble was a very painstaking, careful actor, whose performances might be expected to improve, and he was watched with great and growing interest.

His *Romeo* was not a success. One can imagine that he was unable to let himself go sufficiently. His *Macbeth* is said to have been too noisy and boisterous. As *Lady Macbeth* Mrs. Siddons was seen to be steadily building up her part, which began well enough, but was to end in the great actress's greatest triumph. *Zanga* was another of Kemble's successes. At the close of the season he went to Liverpool to recite a prologue on the opening night of the New Theatre there, which he had taken in partnership with James Aickin, with whom he was afterwards to fight a duel, or rather, to stand up and be shot at by.

His next season began under a heavy handicap. Mrs. Siddons had had to go away to recruit her health, but Kemble made a brave fight, and early in October appeared in his own arrangement of "*Henry V*," followed a few days later by the "*Tempest*," also his own adaptation. In this he did not appear. He then played a series of comedy parts, including *Sir Walter Raleigh*, *Young Marlowe*, and *Charles Surface*, in which he appeared 10th November, 1790. In none of these was he very successful, and in *Charles Surface* was a failure. He himself used to relate two stories of the last named, one complimentary the other uncomplimentary to himself. One was to the effect that the great Sheridan himself praised his Charles, saying it was the only true reading of the part. The other related how once, when offering reparation to a gentleman whom he had insulted when drunk, Kemble was asked to give a promise that he would never play *Charles Surface* again. The promise was given and kept. On 7th December Mrs. Siddons made her reappearance as *Isabella*, and on the 4th June, 1791, there took place the last performance in the old Drury Lane Theatre and on Garrick's stage. The old theatre was condemned by the authorities to be pulled down. It must have been a fine house, for it was designed by Wren, and had been redecorated by the brothers Adams. The great Dr. Johnson had immortalized it in a poem, and it had been the home of the mighty Garrick. The last performance given in it was "*The Country Girl*," followed by a farce called "*No Song*, *No Supper*." The farewell lines were spoken by Palmer.

Whilst the theatre was rebuilding the company removed to the Haymarket Opera House, where Kemble continued to direct affairs, and worked magnificently. He created some new characters, including *Hotspur*, *Pirithons* in Murphy's "*Rival Sisters*," to which he contributed a prologue, and *Horatio* in the "*Fair Penitent*."

The famous duel with Aickin occurred in this season. That gentleman conceived himself offended by something Kemble had said to him when in his cups, and challenged the tragedian. The combatants repaired to Marylebone Fields. Kemble appears to have allowed Aickin and his second, Bannister, to do what they liked with him. They literally stood him up to be shot at and Aickin fired, but missed. Kemble then fired in the air, and honour was satisfied. Kemble afterwards stated that the moment he saw his opponent start to take aim, he knew there was nothing to be afraid of.

The following season, 1793, the company migrated to the other Haymarket Theatre, and Kemble made one of the successes of his career as *Octavian* in the "*Mountaineers*" of the younger Colman. This is said to have been a most picturesque performance of all the states and stages of misery.

It was an artistic triumph. Kemble was so anxious to produce the play and play the part, that he wittingly incurred a large financial loss in doing so.

Meantime, the new Drury Lane was nearing completion. Kemble watched over the proceedings with the care of a parent, and pored over the construction of the new scenery with the assiduity of an antiquarian.

Everything was to be done with historical accuracy under the supervision of one William Capon, draughtsman to the Royal Family. This gentleman had a large studio on the outskirts of London to which Kemble would pay daily visits, sometimes accompanied by the great Sir Joshua Reynolds. At last all was complete, and on 21st April, 1794, new Drury Lane opened with "*Macbeth*," in which both Kemble and Mrs. Siddons appeared. It was a great occasion. The house was packed from floor to ceiling, in spite of the fact that the price of the seats had, perforce, to be raised. The theatre was capable of holding, at the new prices, over £700.

At this performance Charles Kemble made his first appearance at Drury Lane, playing *Malcolm*. He had undergone some training in the previous year under his brother Stephen at Edinburgh. Other features of the performance were a lake of real water and the announcement of an iron curtain in preparation, both designed to reassure the audience in case of fire. In this production the Ghost of *Banquo* was also dispensed with and left to the imagination. Would he had been laid for always!

No other performance of any especial importance was given this season, excepting perhaps a translation by Kemble of a French musical romance, with music by Storace. The season was extended till 8th July, when it closed with a performance of "*The Country Girl*."

Kemble now settled down to some years of harassing and worrying management of the theatre. He was determined to do things well, and he did them well, but only obtained the necessary funds with very great difficulty, even when the treasury could boast of them. He often had to importune them for his own and his sister's salary, upon pain of non-appearance, and on one occasion was himself arrested for a debt incurred by the proprietors, an incident which led to his temporary resignation, as we shall presently see.

The season of 1794–5 opened in September, Kemble making his first appearance in a new character, 28th October, when he appeared as the *Prince of Guastalla* in "*Emilie Galotte*," a translation from the German.

He also appeared as *Heraclius* in the "*Roman Father*," as the *Duke* in "*Measure for Measure*," as *Bertram* in "*All's Well that Ends Well*," and 10th March, 1795, as *Shylock* in "*The Merchant of Venice*." Both versions were his own—he was now becoming quite an adept at adapting Shakespeare! Moreover, he made his mark in comedy with a very excellent performance of *Penruddock* in the "*Wheel of Fortune*" by Richard Cumberland, the prototype of *Sir Fretful Plagiary*. At the first performance of "*The School for Scandal*" Cumberland had refused either to laugh himself or permit his children, who were in the box with him, to do so. On being told of this Sheridan made the famous repartee, "He ought to have; I laughed all through his tragedy!"

At the close of 1795 an unfortunate incident occurred, and for once Kemble's cold, correct, and chaste calm seems to have deserted him, for in the newspapers of that time appears a public apology for having made violent amorous advances to Miss Maria de Camp, with whom he was then acting. The more legitimate advances of his brother were, however, received, and the young lady afterwards became Mrs. Charles Kemble.

Excepting for this unfortunate incident, Kemble's career was a model of dignity and domesticity.

His next important creation was *Sir Edward Mortimer* in Colman's "*Iron Chest*."

This play has since become a favourite, and many distinguished actors, and especially the great Edmund Kean, have made a great success of *Sir Edward*, but Kemble did not do so, and "*The Iron Chest*" was very nearly doomed to oblivion after the first performance. Kemble was far from well, and taking opium in his dressing-room previous to going on for his part, which was specially written for him. Colman was so furious at his failure that he published the play with an introduction abusing Kemble. "I owe Kemble," said he,

"For his illness	Compassion.
"For his conduct under it	Censure.
"For his refusing to make an apology	A smile.
"For his making an apology	A sneer.
"For his mismanagement	A groan.
"For his acting	A hiss."

This introduction was afterwards withdrawn, and copies of the play containing it are at a premium with collectors.

"*The Iron Chest*" was followed on 2nd April, 1796, with the production of "*Vortigern*," a tragedy by Samuel Ireland, fraudulently given out as being by Shakespeare.

Kemble had from the first suspected the fraud, and exposed it very effectually by speaking the lines in his very best Shakespearean manner. The audience at once saw there was something wrong, not with the delivery, but with the goods. At the line "And when this solemn mockery is o'er," a howl of ridicule rose from the whole audience, and Kemble had successfully slain the spurious masterpiece. When the play was afterwards published, the Irelands—father and son—who had concocted the fraud, complained that Kemble had damned the play by his manner of performing it, as indeed he had! The whole incident was most regrettable, especially as Samuel Ireland was a dramatist of real talent with no need to resort to such tricks. Sheridan's attitude in the transaction seems to have been curious. He paid the author a large sum of money down, and Ireland afterwards stated the authorship was a matter of apparent indifference to Sheridan, who obviously did not think much of Shakespeare. Probably he thought more of Sheridan! In any case, the brilliant author of the "*Critic*" must have been able to detect the fraud had he cared to exert himself.

On 23rd May, 1796, Mrs. Kemble made her last appearance on the stage as *Flavia* in "*Celadon and Florimal,*" following the "*Roman Actor.*" After the performance her husband led her forward to make her final obeisances to the audience, who cheered her warmly. She had been an excellent and pretty actress in small parts. *Lady Anne* in "*Richard III*" was probably her most ambitious effort. The next season Kemble only created one new part, that of *Sextus* in the "*Conspiracy*" of his old friend Captain Jephson, which was not, however, a success. The following season Drury Lane struck welcome oil in "Monk" Lewis's "*Castle Spectre.*" Kemble, in the character of *Percy*, had to perform an acrobatic feat. Percy is climbing out of the top window of a castle to get to his beloved Angela, when he is surprised by his guards. He at once falls flat back on to a sofa, where he feigns sleep. Kemble's aptitude and agility in performing this trick surprised his audience, who did not quite realize that the stately Kemble was an actor who knew his business. He was now on the eve of another great success. For some time past his friends had noticed that he was often very abstracted, shut himself long in his library, and even appeared careless and negligent in his dress, a thing very unusual in him, although he was no fop. He was busily studying the character of *The Stranger* in Benjamin Thompson's version of Kotzebue's famous play of that name. It was produced on 24th March, 179~~2~~8, and was such a great success that it ran twenty-six nights. In the name part Kemble was at his very best, and even overshadowed his great sister, who played *Mrs. Haller*. But *The Stranger* is the better part, and to its performance Kemble brought the utmost care and study, for he now had more time to devote to the study of his parts, having retired from the management the previous year. He appeared in several new characters, the most successful of which was *Rolla* in "*Pizarro*," in which he was painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence. Pitt was present one night at this performance, and pronounced him "the noblest actor he had ever seen." This play brought the author enormous profit. It was acted thirty-one nights at Drury Lane, and 30,000 copies of the printed edition were eagerly devoured by the public. Kemble created another new character in *De Montfort* in his own adaptation of Joanna Baillie's play. It was not very successful. In the winter season of 1800 we see him resuming management again, with a view to becoming part owner of the theatre. He had designs upon a fourth share, but they did not come off, and at the close of the season of 1801–2 his connexion with the theatre terminated. In the meantime, however, he reappeared in some of his great Shakespearean parts, *King John*, *Lear*, *Richard III* amongst them. He was also busy as an adapter, and most of the versions of Shakespeare played were by him.

Each production showed an advance in his art, and he was now undoubtedly the leader of his profession. But already his reign was beginning to be disputed, and on the horizon of Covent Garden appeared G. F. Cooke, the forerunner of the mighty Edmund Kean, who was to drive John Philip Kemble into retirement.

Kemble now began to make overtures, through the medium of his friend Mrs. Inchbald, for the purchase of a share in Covent Garden. These negotiations initiated, he went for a tour on the Continent. France had not yet recovered from the effects of the Revolution. Kemble revisited Douay, but was horrified to find it, as he wrote to his brother Charles, "in a state of ruin, poverty, and desolation not to be described." He had not the heart even to go up and look at his old room. He then went on to Paris, where he made the acquaintance of the great Talma, whom he found an "agreeable man," Madame Contat, no longer the person she had been, and other members of the *Comédie française*. On the whole the French manner of acting tragedy did not please him. The grand manner had disappeared with the Revolution. The Parisians are said to have complimented Kemble on his likeness to Napoleon, and persuaded him to try on one of that great man's hats. Whether it fitted or not history does not relate. Kemble saw Napoleon, and was not the least bit struck with his appearance.

From Paris he went to Madrid, and wrote home some of his impressions in Spanish! He was struck by the smallness of Madrid and also by its picturesque-ness. He was immensely delighted with the playing of "La Senora Rita Luna," a great Spanish actress whom he considered second only to his sister.

He also went to see a bull-fight, with which he was disappointed, as people usually are. While in Madrid he heard the news of his father's death.

On his return to England he concluded the negotiations for the purchase of a sixth share in Covent Garden. He bought the share formerly owned by William Lewis, the actor, and for it paid the sum of £23,000. He not only acquired this share but also took his place as manager, somewhat to the consternation of the company, who feared they were going to play nothing but Shakespeare for the rest of their lives. But Kemble could not do that, although he intended that Covent Garden should be known primarily as a Shakespearean theatre. He brought his family along with him to his new home and made his first appearance there on 24th September, 1803, as *Hamlet*. On the 27th Mrs. Siddons appeared as *Isabella*. On 3rd October Kemble played *Richmond* to the *Richard III* of Cooke, who was now sharing the limelight with him. It was agreed that this great actor and Kemble should alternately support each other in principal characters. At first the arrangement worked well, but Kemble is said to have gradually elbowed Cooke out, and much ill-feeling resulted.

However, Kemble played some very good seconds, supporting Cooke as—in addition to *Richmond*, *Antonio*, *Old Norval*—the *King* in "*Henry IV–II*," when Cooke played *Falstaff*. This production was announced for 9th January, and the curtain was rung up on it, but Cooke was too drunk even to play *Falstaff*, and so the "*Provoked Husband*" was substituted, after Kemble had apologized to the audience for Cooke, who, he stated, *really was ill!* But they knew well enough what was the matter, yet such was Cooke's hold upon them that when he appeared a few nights later they readily forgave him. Cooke supported Kemble as, amongst others, *Pizarro* in "*Pizarro*," *Sciolto* in the "*Fair Penitent*," *Macduff*, *Banquo*, and *Iago*. One night there was an uproar during the performance of "*Macbeth*" because *Banquo's* ghost did not appear.

Richard III was Cooke's perquisite, but Kemble got round that by playing *Richard, Duke of Gloster*, in "*Jane Shore*," 16th October, 1805. But previously to this, in December, 1804, both Cooke and Kemble had temporarily to take a back seat during the short but glorious reign of the prodigy Master Betty.

In 1806 Kemble revived the "*Tempest*" and played *Prospero*, and by pronouncing the word "aches," aitches, in the line "Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar," found himself the centre of a controversy that drew crowded houses to the theatre for many nights more than might otherwise have been the case. Afterwards, when Cooke played the part, the audience crowded the theatre anxious to hear what he had to say, but the astute actor omitted the line!

On 10th February, 1807, Kemble "created" *Reuben Glenroy* in "*Town and Country*," his last original character.

"*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*," nicely cleaned up, with a few lines of his own added, was produced 21st April, 1808. Kemble played *Valentine*.

In the small hours of the morning of 20th September, 1808, Covent Garden was burnt to the ground in a fatal fire in which twenty people lost their lives. It was thought to have originated with some burning wadding fired from a gun at the performance of "*Pizarro*" the preceding evening. The theatre was very inadequately insured, and the Kembles were nearly ruined. Boaden, in his Life of Kemble, gives a vivid account of the appalling blaze, also of a visit of consolation to Kemble, when the tragedian gave utterance to a speech which no one but a madman could have made under such circumstances. Boaden is evidently drawing upon a dramatic imagination! However, Kemble's friends all rallied round him, and the Duke of Northumberland lent him £10,000 on the security of his word alone. The Duke considered himself under an obligation to Kemble for having given his son, Lord Percy, a few lessons in elocution! Schemes were at once set on foot for rebuilding the theatre, and in the meantime the Covent Garden company migrated to the Haymarket, first to the Opera House, then to the theatre. At the Opera House an absurd and disconcerting accident happened to Mrs. Siddons when playing *Queen Katherine* in "*Henry VIII.*" The chair in which she sat was so small that when she rose to make her most dignified exit it stuck close to her! The most important production during this interim season was "*King Lear*," produced 27th February, 1809. Kemble played *Lear*, and his brother Charles played *Edgar*. The version performed was that on which Tate, Garrick, and Colman had all laid their hands, and now Kemble added his little bit. The play should have been rechristened "Actors' Pie."

The foundation of the new Covent Garden Theatre, designed by Robert Smirke, was laid by the Prince of Wales, 31st December, 1808. The ceremonial was a masonic one, Kemble and Harris being admitted members of the Craft the preceding day. The Prince, who wore his insignia as Grand Master of all the masons, was accompanied by his only masonic brother, the Duke of Sussex. After the ceremony a great dinner was held, at which Kemble experienced a very pleasant surprise. The Duke of Northumberland returned him his I.O.U. for the £10,000, cancelled, with instructions to light a joyful bonfire with it.

Unfortunately, the opening of the New Theatre was not so harmonious. It was opened 18th September, 1809, with "*Macbeth*," a play so frequently associated with unpleasant happenings, before and behind the curtain, that it is now regarded almost as a Jonah in the profession.

Owing to the losses and expenses incurred by the burning of the old theatre and building of the new, Kemble and the committee of management decided to increase the prices. The consequence was that the moment Kemble appeared there was an uproar which continued throughout the whole evening, and he and Mrs. Siddons had to play their parts in dumb show. "Old prices" was the war-cry of the audience, and it was taken up nightly for sixty odd nights. The disturbances became famous as the O.P. riots. The audiences especially vented their spleen upon any members of the Kemble family, although John Philip was the only one in any way responsible, and he not entirely so. After the sixty-seventh performance the theatre was shut for a time, and then reopened, but the disturbances still continued. Then Kemble tried Garrick's successful expedient of packing the pit with prize-fighters. But that only infuriated the mob all the more. Then legal proceedings were tried, but with no avail. Then a select committee was formed, consisting of the Solicitor-General, the Recorder of the

City of London, the Governor of the Bank of England, and others, and issued a report in favour of the reform, but neither they nor their report was listened to. Finally the dispute was settled, as so many are, over the dinner-table. On 4th December, Kemble was invited to meet the ringleaders of the rioters at a public dinner at the "Crown and Anchor," one Henry Clifford, a barrister-at-law, being in the chair. Certain resolutions adopting, in the main, a return to the old scale, were passed, and Kemble accepted them. Amongst other demands they insisted upon the immediate dismissal of Brandon the box-office keeper, a perfectly innocent person, who had done his duty manfully to his employers under extremely trying circumstances. To the disgrace of the rioters and human nature generally, he was made a scapegoat of and dismissed, and peace again reigned.

The burning of Covent Garden was succeeded in the following year by that of Drury Lane, believed by many to be the work of an incendiary. It may have been some consolation to Kemble to see that even if he had never left the Lane, the same misfortune would have pursued him there, but Drury Lane was fully insured.

Kemble had now entered upon the last decade of his professional career. Kean had appeared upon the scenes and, at one bound, as Garrick had done before him, had all London at his feet, and administered the death-blow to the school of which Kemble was the last and perhaps the greatest exponent.

On 26th March, 1816, Kemble was foolish enough to try to carry the war into the enemy's camp, by playing *Sir Giles Overreach* and challenging comparison with Kean, in one of his mightiest performances.

The result was a complete defeat, and the stately actor retired discomfited and hissed. He played his last new rôle in his own line, 29th February, 1812, when he appeared as *Brutus* in "*Julius Cæsar*," supported by Young as *Cassius*, and his brother Charles as *Mark Antony*. On the 29th June, 1812, Mrs. Siddons, as *Lady Macbeth*, took her farewell of the stage; her brother lingered on for another five years, of which he absented himself for about two, when he took a long holiday, staying with various friends in England and Ireland. During his absence Master Betty had reappeared, now a grown man, and exceedingly nice fellow, and a sound, but not by any means great, actor. Kemble reappeared 15th January, 1814, playing *Coriolanus*. His old manager, Richard Brinsley Sheridan, died 7th July, 1817, a sad wreck of his former self, and in very embarrassed circumstances. In March, 1817, Kemble took a formal farewell of the Edinburgh audience, when he was presented with a poetical address, written by no less a person than Sir Walter Scott. After this tour he returned to Covent Garden, and 23rd June, 1817, made his last appearence on the stage. He played, appropriately enough, *Coriolanus*, his greatest character and "the noblest Roman of them all." There was an immense audience, which included the greatest French and the greatest English actors, Talma and Kean.

When the curtain fell the great audience shouted "no farewell," meaning either that they hoped never to see the last of him, or that the last of him should be the best of him, and he must not spoil his matchless performance by an indifferent speech. But he insisted upon speaking a few words. When the curtain finally fell there was a repetition behind of the scenes in front.

Many of his fellow-actors and actresses stole his properties as keepsakes.

A week later, on the 27th June, a banquet was given in his honour at the Freemason's Tavern. Lord Holland was in the chair, with Kemble on his right and the Duke of Bedford on his left. Many of those distinguished by science, literature, art, and blood were present. Drury Lane, through Rae and Matthews, presented him with a vase. Young recited Campbell's famous Ode, and Talma made a speech in English. At the close Kemble passed down the room, shaking hands with all the company present. After his exit they drank one toast to his health and enjoyment of his rest, and then went soberly home. A dignified ending to a dignified career.

Kemble had all his life been troubled with a tiresome asthmatic cough. When acting he had managed wonderfully well to keep it under control, but now that the restraint was removed it seemed to get hold of him, and he was forced to go and take up his residence in the South of France. This he did at Toulouse, but political ill-feeling and one thing and another rendering the place too hot for an Englishman, he retired to Switzerland. On the 2nd October, 1820, Harris, of Covent Garden, died, and Kemble returned to England to look after his interest in the property. This, which amounted to a sixth share, he made over to his brother Charles. He let his house in Great Russell Street; it was afterwards absorbed in the British Museum. His library, collection of old plays, and other effects were sold for a sum of close upon £5000, of which £2000 was paid for the plays alone, acquired by the Duke of Devonshire. He then travelled a little in Italy, when he said his pleasure and interest were marred by the terrible squalidity of the poor. He returned to Lausanne, where he died 26th February, 1823. The end was very sudden, following upon a slight stroke of apoplexy. He was buried amongst some of his compatriots in a piece of ground adjoining the cemetery in the Berne Road. A large number of resident English attended the funeral, and the town generally went into mourning. Although he was by birth a Roman Catholic, he was attended in his last illness by a Protestant clergyman, and is believed to have died in that faith. His will was proved 26th April, 1823, by his widow and his brother Charles, joint trustees and principal legatees, although there were various bequests to other members of his family. His wife survived him over twenty years, and died in her ninetieth year in May, 1845, at Leamington. A statue of Kemble as *Cato*, and completed by Hinchcliffe from designs by Flaxman, was in Westminster Abbey until 1865, when it was removed by permission of his niece, Fanny Kemble. It has been succeeded by another which, with a companion one of Mrs. Siddons, is now to be seen in St. Andrew's Chapel in the Abbey.

Kemble never had any children, and at his wife's death his property was divided amongst the surviving members of his own and his sister's family. The magnificent helmet, designed by Flaxman, presented to him by the city of Edinburgh, which he wore as *Coriolanus*, is now in the possession of the Garrick Club, to which it was presented by Sir Squire Bancroft, in memory of the late Mr. Henry Kemble, the latest member of this illustrious family to achieve histrionic fame. Mr. Henry Kemble was a first-rate comedian, invaluable in fat men's parts. He may have borne some resemblance to his ancestor Stephen. Of the remaining members of the Kemble family, Mrs. Siddons died 8th June, 1831, nearly twenty years after her retirement from the stage. Charles, who lived to be a very old man and became Reader of Plays to the Lord Chamberlain, died in 1854. Stephen, who played *Falstaff*, without padding, died in 1822. Fanny Kemble, the daughter of Charles, authoress of "Records of a Girlhood," and "Records of Later Life," died in 1893.

The Kembles were certainly a distinguished family and, with the exception of Mrs. Siddons, John Philip Kemble was the most distinguished of them all. He was a very fine actor, the greatest representative of a great school, the traditions of which, to some extent, still survive.

In appearance, John Philip Kemble was tall, handsome and classical, and the only thing that marred the dignity of his acting was his unfortunate voice.

His portrait was frequently painted by contemporary artists, great and small. Perhaps the most famous is that as *Hamlet* by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Although painted in character, many of John Philip's contemporaries considered it the best likeness of himself at his best.

In character Kemble may have found it rather trying to live up to the very high ideal which he set for himself, but he succeeded very creditably on the whole, with very few lapses. The strict religious and scholastic training of his early life left its mark upon him, but he came dangerously near being a prig, and he probably owed his salvation, if he got it, quite as much to the stage as to the seminary. He was very important and superior, was John Philip, and when he and his sister Sarah got together, there was not much room for the rest of the town. Whether they spoke blank verse to each other is not known, but it is quite possible. Mrs. Siddons' order to the waiter:

"You've brought me water, boy, I asked for beer!" is well known.

But with all his foibles and vanities Kemble was a very fine fellow, and had a very tender side to his nature. He was devoted to his family and his somewhat trying old father.

Distress and poverty made him unhappy, and his Italian tour really was spoilt by the amount of it he saw there. And this tenderness in his nature redeemed his severely classic style from absolute coldness and chastity in the uncomfortable sense. This trait enabled him to play such parts as *The Stranger* with sympathy and conviction, and raised him to a far higher level than Quin and Colley Cibber, though of course Quin beat him in the matter of humour, never Kemble's strong point. Neither he nor his sister Sarah excelled in that, except, perhaps, unconsciously.

As a manager and producer Kemble was first-rate. He was very fair and square in all his dealings in the first capacity, and in the second he did for the mechanical side of his art what Garrick had done for the natural and artistic. He completed the picture. There is surely no reason why the picture should not be completed.

True, something must be left to the imagination, and the more the better, generally speaking, but clothes may not, and as *Macbeth* has to wear them, why not the correct ones? It is very curious that Garrick, who so courageously broke through all the old traditions of acting, should have been afraid to revolutionize the dress. He had carefully considered the subject and said that it did not matter, nor did it—to him. Moreover, he added that he was afraid to make the reformation, some said afraid of the cost. In any case, John Kemble did make it and made it well, and by his successful management, production, and acting formed a successful link in the dramatic development of the drama. John Kemble was seen at his very best in *Coriolanus*. The part suited him, and he suited the part. And that fact sums up very fairly his position as an actor.

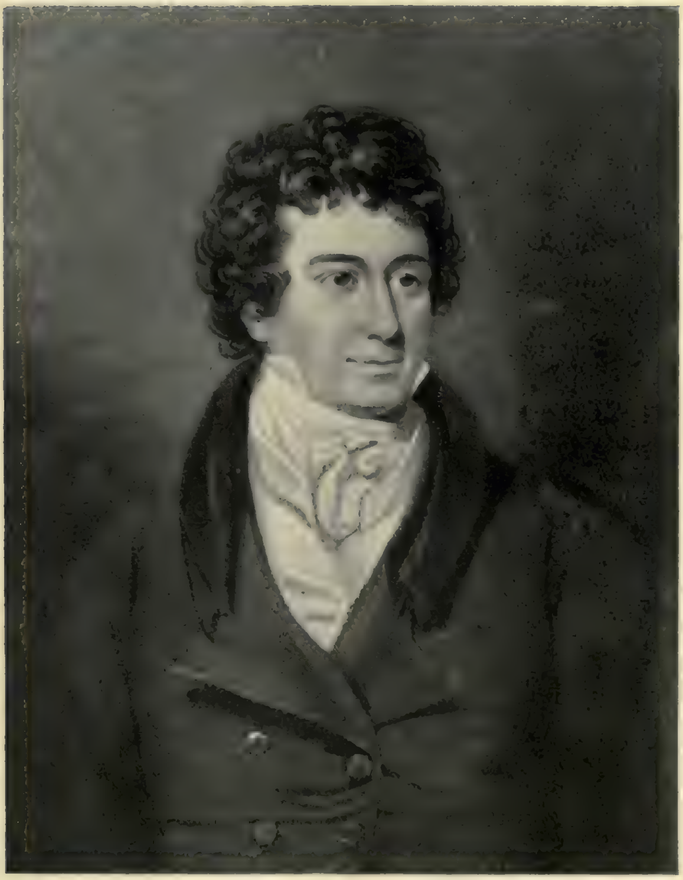
EDMUND KEAN

1787–1833

THE life of Edmund Kean reads like a romance, and probably most of what is recorded of his early years, before he conquered London in 1814, is one. He himself was almost the only person who could speak with authority upon the subject, and he seldom spoke the truth, or, at any rate, the truth unadorned.

As far as is known he was the illegitimate son of one Edmund or Aaron Kean, a man who was employed in some unknown capacity at the Royalty Theatre, and a Miss Anna or Nance Carey, an actress in a small way, and an itinerant vendor of pigments, paint, and perfumes, the daughter of George Saville Carey, actor and author of "*Sally in our Alley*." Edmund Kean, the elder, had a brother Moses Kean, who is said to have been a remarkable mimic, so that for those interested in such speculations there is some evidence of hereditary talent in the case of young Edmund.

Edmund Kean was born on 4th November, 1787, in George Saville Carey's chambers in Gray's Inn, and his arrival was not particularly welcome to his mamma, in whom the maternal instincts were not predominant. After a couple of years—or only a few months, according to some authorities—Miss Carey handed over her child to the care of a Miss Tidswell, who was so good



EDMUND KEAN.

to him that she was afterwards accused of being his mother, the fatherdom being attributed to no less august a personage than the Duke of Norfolk. Both of them denied the claim, but admitted that they would have been proud to have acknowledged it if they could. At the age of three Kean is said to have made his first appearance on the stage, and that no less a stage than Drury Lane, where he was afterwards to make his greatest triumphs. He appeared as *Cupid* in the ballet of "*Noverre*," and is said to have been chosen on account of his wonderful dark eyes. He also related that he appeared again at Drury Lane in the following year as a page in "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*," and was so severely handled by the posture-master that he had to wear irons on his legs for some years afterwards, but this affliction is also attributed to the carelessness of a nurse.

The next we hear of him he is living with his aunt, Mrs. Price, a dressmaker in Southwark; by her he is sent to school in Soho, and there we get the first glimpse of his strange, wild nature. Unable to endure the discipline of a school, he ran away, walked to Portsmouth and shipped as cabin-boy on a ship bound for Madeira. If the confinement and discipline of a school had been irksome to him, that of a ship was very much more so, and he employed his talent to get out of it. He feigned deafness and paralysis, as the result of a cold, so wonderfully, that he was sent on shore to the hospital, where he puzzled the doctors so much that they sent him home as an interesting and incurable patient in the same ship in which he had come out. So runs the not very trustworthy story. Young Kean had to play his part all the way home, and never relaxed even in a gale when the ship narrowly escaped foundering. But once landed at Southampton he very quickly recovered his hearing and the use of his limbs, and set off to tramp to London. On arriving at his mother's home in Southwark he found she was away on tour, so betook himself to his very kind friend Miss Tidswell. Some authorities have it that he went first to his uncle Moses Kean, the ventriloquist. Whether that is so or not, he very soon returned to Miss Tidswell again, who gave him valuable instruction in acting and reciting Shakespeare. In order to make him play with proper feeling, he used to relate in after years that she made him substitute *Uncle* for *Yorick* in the graveyard scene in "*Hamlet*," so he evidently had some affection for his uncle. "Aunt Tid" also sent him to school in Green Street, Leicester Square, from which he continually played truant, sometimes stopping away for days, and picking up a living by dancing and performing in taverns and travelling shows. After these little adventures he would always return to his Aunt Tid, or his mother, on the rare occasions when she was in town, with sufficient sordid gain to alleviate the expected scolding or beating. At Drury Lane in 1801 he was fortunate enough to play *Prince Arthur* to the *King John* of John Philip Kemble, and the *Constance* of Mrs. Siddons. He used, when not acting, to entertain the green-room with excerpts from his répertoire, and especially from "*Richard III*." On one of these occasions Mrs. Charles Kemble overheard him, and recorded that she was very much struck with his cleverness. About this time, too, his uncle Moses died, and he took up his abode entirely, or as entirely as his roving disposition would permit, with Miss Tidswell.

Partly through the instrumentality of Dr. Thomas

Young (father of the tragedian Charles Young, who afterwards attempted to rival Kean), to whose wife Kean's mother sold perfumes, Edmund was introduced to one Mrs. Clarke, who engaged him to recite at her house to her guests. There are amusing, if not very well authenticated, stories told of the youngster's first arrival at Mrs. Clarke's, with a theatrical knock on the front door that shook the house from cellar to roof-tree. And if his manner of entry had nearly brought the house down, his acting did so completely, and for a long time he continued to be an honoured guest and friend at the Clarkes'.

At the first of the entertainments he was very proud, and would not accept the shillings, sixpences, and other small coins that were flung to him, but he was afterwards persuaded to do so and take them home to his mother, who soon relieved him of them. Mrs. Clarke then made an arrangement with her, by which her son remained at her (Mrs. Clarke's) house, and was boarded and educated, paying for his education out of the money he earned by his recitations, anything that was left over being sent to his mother.

But his visit came to rather an untimely end. One day at the Clarkes' they were getting up a theatre party. Little Edmund was mentioned as being of the number, and a tactless person present remarked, "What, is *he* coming with us!" This was too much for the child's sensitive nature; he promptly rose, left the room and the house, and was not seen again for several days. Finally he was brought back by a friendly ostler, who found him lying insensible on a muck-heap in the stable. When sufficiently recovered he stated that he was so hurt by the slight the tactless gentleman had put upon him that he had determined to run away to America, and not return until they would be proud to know him. With this object he had actually tramped as far as Bristol, but on his arrival there his condition was not such as to recommend him to any ship's captain, so he tramped back to town, becoming too weak and ill even to earn, by means of his antics, a little food, and finally collapsing altogether in the aforesaid stable. It was a pleasant surprise to regain consciousness and find himself back in his cosy little cot at Mrs. Clarke's. But it was the last of his escapades from that house. Mr. Clarke said he could not keep him any longer. A small benefit was got up for him, which realized between forty and fifty pounds, and he was packed off to Windsor in charge of one Captain Miller, who had hopes of finding him something to do. But there was only one thing he could do, and we soon hear of him reciting and giving his entertainments in the royal town, finally giving a command performance before no less a person than his august Majesty King George III, and receiving a guinea from that close-fisted monarch. This visit gave rise to the utterly unfounded assertion that Kean was once educated at Eton College. It was an assertion that he, after his rise to fame, was always very slow to contradict. There is some doubt as to the exact date of this visit to Windsor, but there seems none at all that it did actually happen. Other adventures that happened about this time are his engagement as a tumbler at Saunders' Circus, when he fell and broke both his legs, traces of which accident he carried with him to the grave. There is an amusing description of Kean as he was when with Saunders' show, given by one Davies, manager of Astley's Theatre. Kean is described as "a slim young chap with marks of paint—and bad paint it was, for all the world like ruddle on the jaw of a sheep—on his face, a-tying up some of the canvas wot the wonderfullest carakters and curosties of that 'ere exhibit was painted upon." Kean varied his packing work by turning back-somersaults, and was reproved by Mr. Saunders, who addressed him as "Master King Dick." We also hear of him giving recitations and readings at the Sans Souci Theatre in Leicester Place, and at another time giving a complete reading of "*The Merchant of Venice*" at the Rolls Rooms. After this, until 1806, all information regarding Kean's life is very vague, but it is rumoured that he was playing in the provinces, and there is some evidence of his acting under the name of Carter in Yorkshire. There is very good evidence that he was appearing as a low comedian in Dumfries in the early part of 1806, and in June of that year he made his first appearance at the Haymarket, playing very small parts, whilst Rae, formerly a friend of his, played all the leads, and affected to forget his erstwhile acquaintance. But Kean remembered, and a time came when he had an ample revenge. At the close of the Haymarket season he applied for an engagement, without success, to John Philip Kemble. So he returned to the country, and played in various towns in England, Scotland, and Ireland. In Belfast he had the honour of acting with Mrs. Siddons, playing *Osmyn* to her *Zara* in the "*Mourning Bride*." The part, which Kean was obliged to take up at very short notice, did not suit him in the least; he did not know it, nor care about it, and Mrs. Siddons was disgusted with her "support," dubbing him a "horrid little man." But the next night, when she saw him play

Jaffer and follow that with *Norval*, her opinion underwent a great change. After this he joined Watson's company, which toured the midland counties, and at a performance in Birmingham, William Charles Macready, then a schoolboy home for the holidays, was present, but not the slightest bit impressed by the acting of the future genius. On July 17th, 1808, Kean married a Miss Mary Chambers, at Stroud, borrowing the money to pay the parson's fee from the solitary bridesmaid. Miss Chambers, who was nine years older than Kean, had been a governess, but had run away and gone on the stage. The marriage, as far as Kean was concerned, was not one of very great affection, and poor Mary's troubles were very soon to begin. A few months after his marriage Kean accepted an engagement with a touring company at Swansea, and the question arose as to ways and means to get there, neither of them having any money. There was only one thing to be done. They must walk, and this they did, and incredible were the hardships they had to undergo before they reached their destination. Mrs. Kean was within one month of having her first baby; walking was not an easy matter and dancing an impossible one, and yet she had to assist her husband in his efforts to earn a miserable pittance to keep them going by entertaining the rustics with song, recitation, and dance. But they eventually fetched up at their destination, and Kean hastened to the manager to get a little salary, in advance, for their immediate expenses.

At Swansea Kean's first child, a son, was born, and was named Howard. At first Kean did not play leading parts with Cherry. They were entrusted to a thoroughly incompetent actor called Smith, whom

Kean eventually superseded by means of an absurd trick. Smith was presenting such a ridiculous portrayal of *Hamlet* that Kean, who was playing *Polonius*, was so overcome by the absurdity of the situation that he turned a back-somersault. Explanations to the management followed, with the somewhat surprising result that Kean played the leads in future. From Swansea the company went by easy stages to Waterford, where Kean's second son, Charles, was born. In this town Kean made the acquaintance of Sheridan Knowles and Grattan. These two gentlemen were interested in fencing, and went to the theatre with the sole object of seeing the fight. They therefore, after taking their seats, adjourned to a tavern till the last act, when they returned, and were so struck by the fighting ability of the man who played *Hamlet* that they made inquiries, and found out from a garrulous old body connected with the theatre that he was "Mr. Kean, the leading actor, singer and stage-manager of the company, and the best harlequin in Ireland, Wales, or the West of England." So it was arranged that he should come and give them lessons, or rather practice, in fencing, for they were both proficient swordsmen. The results were very useful to Kean, who by these means made the acquaintance of most of the garrison; his benefit was a bumper and yielded him £40, which must have come in very useful, with the new mouth to feed.

Next we hear of him at Exeter, when he succeeded in winning the goodwill of two of the most prominent members of the community, a Mr. Nation, well known as a Shakespearean lover and connoisseur of the stage, an ancestor of the present gentleman of the same name and fame, and of his still more famous nieces, the

Misses Irene and Violet Vanbrugh. Also Mrs. Buller, of Downes, a family likewise well known to the present generation, though more through the arts of war than of peace. Both these residents gave Kean their distinguished and substantial patronage.

Another historical event in Kean's career may have taken place at Exeter, but some authorities have it Stroud, and that was his stern refusal to play "seconds" to Master Betty, the "freak" dramatic sensation of his time. "Damme," said Kean, "I won't play second to any man living excepting John Kemble." The exact locality that gave rise to this scene matters little, but the incident is important as showing the stern faith Kean always had in his own powers, and his indomitable and dignified determination not to have them insulted. From Exeter he went to Guernsey, where he was voted a dismal failure. His *Hamlet* was practically hissed off the stage, and his *Richard III* treated with scorn. The audience seemed to take the naturalness of his acting as an insult, and when he turned his back upon them and behaved as though he were unconscious of their presence, their fury knew no bounds. Nor did Kean's, and stepping right out of the picture he came down to the footlights and hurled at them the lines: "*Unmannered dogs! Stand ye when I command!*"

The result was an uproar, and an apology was demanded, which Kean, unlike some of his great predecessors, would have died rather than conceded.

The scene caused a disturbance throughout the whole island, which the Governor, Sir John Doyle, had great difficulty in quelling.

Kean as gladly turned his back upon the island as he did upon its audiences, and the next important event in his life occurs when he is at Dorchester, in November, 1813.

The clouds on the horizon had already begun to lift, and he had signed a prospective engagement at the Wych Street (Olympic) Theatre, London, at £3 a week. But it was not by any means certain that the engagement would come off. On the night of 14th November, Kean was appearing at Dorchester as *Octavian* in the "*Mountaineers*," followed by *Kankow, the Savage*, in a pantomime of his own adaptation. The house, Kean used to relate in after life, was empty, but there was a gentleman in a stage-box who appeared to know something about acting, and to him Kean played. This gentleman was no less a person than Arnold, the stage-manager of Drury Lane, who had been sent there by his management at the instance of Kean's kind friend and patron, Dr. Drury.

The result was an introduction and a three years' engagement at Drury Lane at a rising salary of eight, ten, and twelve guineas per week. Kean's cup of happiness was full, and he rushed home to tell his wife the good news. But even now the poor tragedian's bliss was clouded. His son Howard, to whom he was passionately devoted, died, and it was with a heavy heart that the player set out for the capital, where so much fame and fortune awaited him.

On arrival in London he took rooms, that is to say, he rented a garret, in Cecil Street, Strand. At first all went well. He reported himself to Arnold, who received him with every kindness and encouragement, and at the end of the week drew his first salary of eight guineas, most of which had to be sent to his wife to enable her and Charles to join him. But the following week, when he again presented himself at the treasury, he was received with cold displeasure and his money refused him. Elliston of the Olympic had written to The Lane acquainting them with the fact that Kean was his property, "as by contract agreed." Naturally incensed at this apparent double dealing, they would have nothing more to do with Kean, for whom now began perhaps the most trying month in all his heart-breaking career. Long waits in the cold at Drury Lane stage-door, where he was scowled upon by all, as new-comers are in an overcrowded profession. Something very like starvation at home. Kean wrote Elliston a characteristically spirited and quite unjustifiable letter, in which he declared his fixed intention of never setting foot inside the Olympic Theatre, whatever might be the outcome of the present situation. At last this situation was relieved, though history does not relate precisely from which quarter the relief came; probably Dr. Drury and Mr. Arnold had something to do with it. At any rate it was arranged that on condition he paid the weekly salary, £2, of the actor who took his place at the Olympic, Kean should be allowed to fulfil his engagement at Drury Lane. Then came the next ordeal, the interview with the committee. The directors were manifestly disappointed with Kean's appearance. Apparently he had nothing to recommend himself but his wonderful, penetrating black eyes. They thought it wiser for him to begin by appearing in some lesser characters. But Kean's indomitable spirit and perseverance again asserted themselves. "Aut Cæsar, aut nullus," he said. It must be "leads," as agreed upon. So it was arranged that on 26th January he should make his first appearance, in the character of *Shylock*. With a heavy heart, thinking no doubt of the "heavy losses that had, of late, so huddled on *their* backs," the Drury Lane committee went their respective ways, and with a light heart Kean went his. The darkest hour was passed, and the dawn was beginning to break.

Kean only had one rehearsal before playing the part, and that a very futile one. Few of his support turned up, and he just walked through the part in a desultory manner, to accustom himself to the stage. But even this apathetic performance was sufficient to show those concerned that his was to be no traditional *Shylock*. The stage-manager, Raymond, severely remonstrated with him, saying, after the manner of his kind, that it had never been played that way before. "Sir!" said Kean, "I may be wrong, but if so the public will set me right." Covert sneers, which Kean could feel, if not see, were cast at him by the few members of the company present. The atmospheric conditions were as chilly and cheerless as those of the company, and on 26th January, his opening day, Kean trudged to the theatre through deep snow, carrying his Jewish gabardine rolled up under his arm, and, heresy of heresies, a black wig, in his pocket. No one spoke one word of encouragement to him, and Kean's "thank you" to the call-boy was the only sentence not written by Shakespeare that passed his lips until the curtain had fallen on the fourth act. On going to the wings in response to his call, he peeped through a chink in the curtain at a practically empty house, but among the faces there was one that it must have warmed his heart to see, that of his kind friend Dr. Drury. On making his entrance he received the kindly reception always vouchsafed to a new-comer, and the very manner of his bow of acknowledgment caused the scanty audience to prick up their ears.

With his marvellous powers of concentration, so soon to be more fully demonstrated, Kean seemed to convey in that one bow all his past history, present and future hopes and aspirations, and the dignified gratitude of one who had conscientiously striven and bled for his reward. He had not spoken ten words before the ears, already pricked, were glued to attention. When he leant upon his stick and looked askance at *Bassanio* and *Antonio*, Dr. Drury remarked, "he is safe." At the words "*Fair sir, you spat on me on Wednesday last,*" the audience began to realize that there was something here that had not been seen on the stage since the days of Garrick. Probably Powell, who played *Antonio*, and more especially Rae, who was the *Bassanio*, felt the situation even more strongly, having regard to their recent treatment of Kean.

In the scene with *Salarino* and that following with *Tubal*, scenes which mark the turning-point of the play, where comedy is turned to tragedy and *Shylock's* "merry sport" becomes a thing of grim and tragic possibilities, Kean worked his small audience into a frenzy of excitement, and Oxberry afterwards said he could not understand how the devil such a small gathering could make such a noise. But the gathering was rapidly increasing, for many rushed out between the acts and dragged in friends to see the wonderful actor. At the fall of the curtain Kean's triumph was all but complete. It was quite complete when he had reached home and burst in on his wife with the news.

"Mary," said he, "you shall ride in your coach, and Charley, you shall go to Eton."

Then, with a characteristically quick transition, "If only Howard were here! But perhaps he is better where he is."

Mrs. Kean's delight can more easily be imagined than described, nor must his landlady, Miss Williams, be forgotten, for she, good soul, had been so confident of his success that she had substantially backed her opinion and allowed him credit for his board and lodging until after the first performance. And we may be sure that she was royally repaid, for Kean, if possible, was more generous when he had the wherewithal than when he had it not. And he was to have plenty of it now. His name and fame were on everybody's lips. "You have made a hit, sir," condescended one of the directors of Drury Lane. "You have done wonders, sir, you have saved the theatre," said another, more generous. "You have exceeded our expectations, sir," said Mr. Arnold. And so it was, and the receipts sprang from £164 to £325, a wonderful leap, and a wonderful house at the prices that ruled in those days. In consequence, the theatre presented Kean with a bonus of £50. After the third performance of "*Shylock*" he was sent for by the committee to ratify his original contract. They were curious to see how he would behave. His contract was not yet signed. He held them in the hollow of his hand. But, with all his faults, Kean was never the sort of man to take a mean advantage. He signed the original document without a murmur, and the manager, Whitbread, at once tore it up, and presented him with another, offering him the munificent salary of £20 a week. Moreover, he was discharged from his obligation to pay his substitute at the Olympic, an obligation which, however, seems never to have been fulfilled. Kean now began to receive presents from all quarters, and his exchequer was filling up daily, faster than even he could empty it. But the public was getting impatient to see him in a new character, and so on 12th February he appeared as *Richard III*. Long privations had begun to tell their tale, and Kean felt so exhausted that he declared in his dressing-room, before the curtain rose, that he would have to play the part in dumb show. But he did not, and the performance advanced his reputation, if possible, still further. The audience were astounded, especially in the death scene, where he spasmodically continued slashing the air long after he had been deprived of his sword. But after the performance a reaction set in, and Kean was so ill he could not play for a week. The distinguished physician, Sir Henry Halford, was sent to see him by the committee of the theatre, fearful of losing so precious a life. It was not to be lost yet awhile. On 12th March he was quite recovered, and appeared as *Hamlet*. Although his performance in this character was not so consistently excellent as in *Shylock* or *Richard III*, it was replete with wonderful touches that made the great play *live*; a thing it had not done, in London at any rate, for many a long year. On the 5th of May he made another triumph as *Othello*, in some ways the most difficult of all Shakespearean characters. Kean's is said to have been literally perfect. Good *Othellos* were as rare in those days as they are now, and it is not surprising that the nightly receipts sometimes topped £600.

Two days later Kean played *Iago* and continued to alternate the parts, but *Othello* was the better performance. His *Iago* was too eager, virile and passionate, as we can imagine his *Hamlet* was. On 25th May he played *Duke* in "*Riches*," and for his benefit, and it is said the proceeds amounted to £1150. The season closed on 16th July, with "*Richard III.*" Kean had played *Shylock* fifteen times, *Richard* twenty-five, *Othello* ten, *Hamlet* and *Iago* eight, and *Luke* four. The profits of the season amounted to upwards of £20,000, and it is not surprising that the committee's gratitude to Kean took very substantial form. They voted him the large sum of £500. Four shareholders of the theatre gave him a share each. Off the stage, too, things were going very prosperously with him. He was fêted and feasted by the highest in the land, but he much preferred the lowest. Gifts showered on him. Lord Jersey presented him with £100. Whitbread, the manager, called on him one morning and put a note for £50 into little Charles's hand. A visitor who called at about this time records that notes and gold were lying upon every piece of furniture in the room, and little Charles was on the hearthrug playing with golden guineas, a rare coin even in those days. With all this grandeur, of course Anne Carey soon appeared upon the scenes. Kean, who was not too anxious to acknowledge the relationship, henceforward made her an allowance of £50 a year until her death. But if he was averse to admitting his parentage, he was more furiously indignant with a disreputable parson called Darnly, who insisted upon calling him brother. Kean was now in much better quarters, having removed from the attic to the first floor. Many distinguished people came to visit him, amongst them Lord Byron, the only nobleman with whom he ever became friends. But the two must have had much in common. Benjamin West, the President of the Royal Academy, also came and drew a portrait of him, as *Richard III*, in which character the artist used to relate the actor's face haunted him so he could not sleep o' nights. The critics all hailed Kean as a genius. Hazlitt's criticisms were, at first, qualified, but later he removed the qualifications. The perennial little Mrs. Garrick sent for Kean, and made him sit in her husband's chair, saying he was the only person fit to do so. She also presented him with some of the great actor's stage jewellery from his escritoire, and some wrinkles for playing *Hamlet* from his répertoire. These latter Kean good-naturedly attempted, but soon discarded. John Philip Kemble admitted that Kean's acting was terribly earnest, but afterwards, allowing jealousy to creep in, could scarcely say a good word for him. That great lion-hunter and tamer Lady Holland inveigled Kean to Holland House, but he was a brute hard to tame, and he disliked a society in which he said they talked a lot of sense about things he knew nothing about, and a lot of nonsense about the one thing he knew something about. Sir George Beaumont presented him with a very curious caped cloak formerly the property of a Spanish grandee, and with this cloak, which he wore upon nearly every occasion, Kean henceforth became identified. But signs of the reckless, mad temperament, that was later to be his undoing, were not wanting. He was passionately fond of horses and a magnificent rider. He bought a horse, which he called Shylock, and upon this animal he played the wildest pranks, riding it up the steps of the theatre very late at night or very early in the morning. He would go for long midnight gallops in the country, jumping the turnpike gates and frightening the peaceful sleeping inhabitants of suburbia out of their wits. Doubtless they thought the wild horseman was the Devil, and he must have looked satanic enough, galloping past with his pale face, flashing dark eyes, curly black tossing hair and Spanish capes flying in the wind.

Part of his time was taken up looking up old friends who had been kind to him in the past, and we may be certain Miss Tidswell was not forgotten—nor were his enemies, those who had slighted and insulted him in his strolling days. Raymond of Drury Lane, the supercilious stage-manager of the first rehearsal of "*Shylock*," was invited by Kean to share a bowl of punch and responded eagerly. The next moment the bowl was upset over his head, whilst the tragedian gloated. It is to be hoped that henceforward the stage-manager was more gentle in his treatment of new-comers.

So ended Kean's first season at Drury Lane, perhaps the most startling and meteoric in the whole history of the drama. He filled in the interim before the next one with a provincial tour, on which he visited, amongst other places, Dublin and Birmingham. Everywhere his London triumph was repeated, and he left the mark of his benevolence on more than one benefactor of his struggling days, and that of his malevolence on more than one malefactor.

In Dublin Kean played all the characters in which he had appeared at Drury Lane the foregoing season, and, in addition, *Macbeth* and *Reuben Glenroy*, in both of which he was to make his first London appearance the forthcoming season.

His enormous success in Dublin resembled that of Garrick, and the manager, Jones, who had three years previously refused to engage Kean to "do everything" at £2 a week, must have had many a bad quarter of an hour when Kean was on the stage. Not only as an actor, but also as a Bohemian, Kean left his mark upon

Dublin. He was the guest of Mr. Grattan at a carousal of the whole Irish Bar, and had some passages with the "watch" afterwards, who, finding him in a somewhat helpless condition, escorted him home with less ceremony than he was now accustomed to.

He made his reappearance at Drury Lane on 3rd October, 1814, playing *Richard*. Though the wild excitement of his first season had naturally abated, Kean continued to pack the house every night he played, and on 5th November appeared, for the first time, as *Macbeth*. The revival was on a great scale of splendour, and Matthew Locke's original music was played. Kean's *Macbeth* was a qualified success. In certain scenes he was magnificent, and when he appeared gazing horror-struck at his blood-stained hands, after the murder of *Duncan*, he held his audience spellbound. But on the whole his *Macbeth* partook too much of the nature of his *Richard*. It was too eager and impulsive, and lacked the almost poetic strain, the touch of the artist that is in the character.

Kean's delivery of the beautiful, heart-rending speeches at the close of the tragedy fell quite flat, but a moment afterwards the house was transfixed at the grim final combat and finely-conceived death when he fell forward on his face, an attitude said to have been suggested by the figure of a soldier on Sir Ralph Abercrombie's monument in St. Paul's Cathedral.

In the banquet scene Kean was very awe-inspiring, but it was thought by many that he would have been still more so had the ghost been dispensed with and the great actor given the opportunity to use his powers to their full extent, and convey what he saw by the force of his acting alone.

On 2nd January, 1815, he played *Romeo* for the first time. Like his *Macbeth*, this performance was "good in parts." Personally he did not at all wish to play the part, and it was only at the earnest request of the committee that he did so. "But," said he to his wife, "I'll disappoint them in it, damned if I don't," and this he very effectually did, especially in the balcony scene and, indeed, in all the love scenes. But in the scene with *Friar Laurence* and the death scene he was unable to resist doing his best, and, as usual, transfixed his audience. The next character of first-rate importance in which he appeared this season was *Richard II.*

This was the first time this play had been seen at Drury Lane, and the first time it had been played for over two hundred years. It was "adapted to the stage" by one "Wroughton," whose sins were mostly of omission, though there was one of commission, in which some of the dialogue of the *Duchess of Gloucester* and *Duchess of York*, characters which were omitted, was assigned to the *Queen* and *Bolingbroke*. Kean's performance as *Richard II*, though of course it had its moments, was regarded by his best friends as a failure. He was altogether too violent and passionate for the weak and vacillating *Richard*. It was gradually becoming clear that the great actor was a portrayer of moods and passions rather than of character. But even his failures were magnificent, and there was always that in them that made his audience long to see him in something else, so there was no falling off in his drawing power.

Other characters that he played for the first time during this season were *Zanga* in "*Revenge*," for his benefit, *Egbert* in "*Ina*," only played once. *Penruddock* in "*The Wheel of Fortune*," *Octavian* in "*The*

Mountaineers"—the character that had led to his engagement at Drury Lane—*Leon* in "*Rule a Wife to have a Wife*," and *Abel Drugger.* Perhaps the best criticism of his performance in the last character was made by Mrs. Garrick. "Dear sir," she wrote, "you can't play *Abel Drugger*"; to which he replied, "Dear madam, I know it! Yours, E. Kean." But he was not going to let the old lady have things all her own way, and at one time, after listening to a long panegyric on her "Davy's" performance, Kean asked her if David could sing. "No!" said Mrs. Garrick. "Well, I can!" said Kean.

The season closed on 13th July, Kean having appeared upwards of a hundred and thirty times. He had played several new characters, none of them remarkably successful, but he still retained his wonderful hold upon the public, who fought for hours at the doors, as before, to see him in the old favourites. In private life, too, he had had a successful season. He had removed to better quarters, to Lady Ryecroft's house at 12 Clarges Street, and was still fêted and feasted as a lion and the recipient of many presents, among which *was* a lion, the gift of Sir Edward Tucker! Kean undertook the education of this animal, which, fortunately perhaps, died before it had proceeded far. As a lion it was rather tame, being of the mild American variety, but even then it cannot have been altogether pleasant as a "surprise" when one entered the room unexpectedly. Kean was fond of springing it upon his friends as such. It was fortunate the lion did not share its master's fancies. He was also presented with two swords by Lord Byron, who loved nothing better than to watch his performances and the play of his features from the orchestra, where he would ensconce himself with his friend Tommy Moore, the Irish poet. Byron also presented him with a gold box, on the lid of which was an inscription and a mosaic rendering of a boar hunt. Henceforth Kean, with more justification than many, adopted a boar for his crest. Sir George Beaumont, in addition to the Spanish cloak, gave him a gentle hint in the form of a picture of Garrick as *Abel Drugger*. Wroughton gave him a beautiful tippet of lace worn by Garrick as *Richard III*, which Kean henceforward wore when playing the character.

During this season, to be exact, on 5th May, 1815, the famous Wolf Club was founded as a Bohemian haunt for actors and others interested in the drama. Kean, who was a born Bohemian, was mainly instrumental in its foundation and was its first president. At first the club was looked upon as a jovial haunt of bonhomie and good-fellowship, but it afterwards got a more sinister reputation. It was whispered that it was nothing less than a "thieves' kitchen" where plots were hatched to frustrate any possibilities of successful rivalry to Kean. But there is no real evidence of that, and although Kean had more than his fair share of vanity and jealousy, there is no reason to suppose he would stoop to such a thing as that. The club was extremely democratic, not to say revolutionary, and no member of the aristocracy was permitted to pass its portals, with the single exception of Lord Byron, who is said to have affected being extremely shocked at the "goings on" he saw there. They must have been pretty bad!

At the close of this season Kean went for another provincial tour, during which he again encountered some old friends and enemies of his struggling days.

At Portsmouth his arrival at a certain inn was heralded with much pomp, and the distinguished guest was received in person by the proprietor. Unfortunately, Kean at once recognized his host as a person who had behaved scurvily to him when times were bad. Kean, looking very poorly clad and half starved, had come in and asked for a drink. The landlord, noticing his appearance, whispered something to his assistant, who promptly retained hold of the drink with one hand until he had the money for it safely in the other. Kean never forgot these little things, and the moment he recognized the landlord turned his back and walked out of the inn. He then repaired to a place where he had been better treated. The old proprietor was dead, but one of his old servants remained. Being without a watch he was presented with £5 by the actor, with orders to buy himself one and remember his old master every time he looked at it. A double instance of Kean's generosity occurred at Northallerton. In former times the manager of the theatre there, one Butler, had advanced Kean the necessary money to get to London and fulfil an engagement at the Haymarket Theatre. Butler was now dead, and his son reigned in his stead.

Kean electrified the town by his performance of *Richard III*, but refused to accept the salary of £80—half the receipts of the performance. He related to the mystified manager how he had been a member of his father's company when a boy of nineteen, and being unable to tramp to London in time to fulfil his engagement, the father had "stood" him an outside seat on the coach. "I told him," said Kean, "that if ever I became a great actor I would not forget him. Now let me redeem the promise to the father by rewarding the son. Man alive! don't you remember young Ted, who played *Harlequin* to your *Goose* when we first produced '*Mother Goose*' here!" Then the delighted manager remembered, and the two shook each other warmly by the hand. But Kean had not yet finished with his benefactions. "And where's old George?" he asked. "Old George" was discovered. "Do you remember me?" said Kean. The old actor could not precisely say that he did, though there was something about Kean's eye, when playing *Richard*, that he seemed to remember. That was not surprising. Few people who saw it ever forgot it. "I am Master Ted," said Kean, "who used to sleep with you, and of whom you predicted great things. You see what a conjurer you are." The sequel was a £20 note slipped into "Old George's" hands.

At another time we hear of Kean playing *Shylock* in a barn near Sevenoaks, for the benefit of some old strolling friends of former days. As a result the barn and the coffers were overflowing. There was as large an audience outside as there was in, and many had to be, and were, content with only hearing the sounds of his matchless voice.

Kean's third season at Drury Lane began on 16th October, 1815, with "*Richard III.*" It had been preceded on 5th October by a wretched performance of "*The Merchant of Venice*," in which Dowton the comedian attempted to fulfil an oft-repeated boast of "acting Kean off the stage" as *Shylock*. His performance, which seems to have reverted to the pre-Macklin days of the comic Jew, was a dismal failure.

Kean's first appearance in a new character this season was on 6th November, when he appeared as *Bajazet* in a revival of "*Tamerlane.*" He does not seem to have made much impression in the part, excepting in his dancing, which a playgoer described as being "glorious in itself."

Kean considered the character of *Bajazet* a very bad one, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Then he played *Florez* in "*The Merchant of Bruges*," and on 12th January, 1816, again startled the whole town by his wonderful and terrible performance of *Sir Giles Overreach* in "*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*." Kean's portrayal of this double-dyed villain was such that it sent several ladies in the theatre into hysterics, Lord Byron into a convulsive fit, and had such an effect upon his fellow-actors that many of them collapsed, and Munden, who had himself given a magnificent performance of *Marall*, had to be dragged off the stage by the armpits, his face fixed upon Kean's in a paralytic stare. "My God," he said, on recovering consciousness behind the scenes, "My God! Is it possible?" The house was frantic, and Kean tore back to his wife in Clarges Street in much the same state as he had to Cecil Street on the evening of his first triumph.

Giles

"I've done it again, Mary," said he. "Well," said that lady, "and what did Lord Essex think of it?" "Damn Lord Essex," said Kean, "*the pit rose at me.*"

In those days the pit represented all that was best in a theatre audience. Art, letters, law, indeed, all the discriminating professions, took their way thither. The ignorant and the illiterate betook themselves to the gallery, the boxes and circles were filled with those who would not condescend to applaud, but Kean exacted their tributes by frightening them out of their wits. The character of *Sir Giles Overreach* is one of the blackest in the whole realm of villainy. It is laid on with very thick colours, and Kean's performance, as may be imagined, spared nothing.

That Massinger's old play was revived at all is said to have been due to Kean's own suggestion, and one can readily believe that he had his eye on this character. The committee and company at Drury Lane were so struck by the marvellous impersonation that they presented him with a magnificent silver cup that was subscribed to by every member of the company, excepting Dowton, still sore from his unsuccessful *Shylock*, and Munden, whose parsimony was proverbial. "You may cup Kean," he is reported to have said, "but you don't bleed Joe Munden!" The cup was presented to him in the green-room by Robert Palmer, the "doyen" of the company, in the presence of a distinguished gathering, amongst whom was Lord Byron. Kean made a graceful speech of thanks, in which he laid stress upon the significant fact that the presentation was made by one who had himself played with Garrick, Barry, and Henderson, but who did not on that account pooh-pooh the talent of the present generation. It is curious to read on the inscription on the cup that Kean proved his success in the part by playing it on no less than twenty-six successive representations. Such an announcement would read curiously nowadays.

The success of "*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*" decided the committee to produce another Massinger play, and on 2nd March the "*Duke of Milan*" was revived, with alterations, most of which are said to have been due to Kean. He played the Duke, *Sforza*. Neither he nor the play were particularly successful, and the revival only ran seven nights.

On 9th May, Maturin's tragedy of "*Bertram*" was produced for the first time. It was a fine play and brought the author much profit. He is said to have made over a thousand pounds by it. Kean played the part of *Bertram*, but did not make much of it, though, of course, he had his moments. One was when uttering the benediction "God bless the child." He is said to have rehearsed this sentence times without number over the cot of his own sleeping child, and eventually acquired a tenderness in utterance "beyond the reach of art."

He made his final appearance this season as *Kitely* in "*Every Man in His Humour*," in which he appeared for his benefit on 5th June. Many considered his performance excellent, but he himself did not, and described himself as a "damned bad Kitely."

However, in spite of these semi-failures, the season had been a brilliantly successful one, and his *Sir Giles Overreach* had confirmed the opinion, now rapidly forming, that he was a transcendent genius and one of the greatest actors of all time. John Philip Kemble was foolish enough to challenge comparison with him in this part. One can scarcely imagine any one less suited to it. His performance was a dire failure. Kemble took the hint, saw that his day was past, and shortly afterwards retired.

This season was marred by an incident which but foreshadowed others. During the run of "*The Duke of Milan*," what has since been known as "the Deptford Tragedy" occurred. Kean repaired to Greenwich to recoup himself after a performance of *Sir Giles*. There he fell in with an old friend of his early days, and together they went to Deptford, when they foregathered with some others and proceeded to enjoy themselves after the usual manner of Bohemians.

Meantime the hours were slipping away. Kean was becoming more and more oblivious, and when the curtain was to have gone up on "*The Duke of Milan*" he had not arrived at the theatre. The manager came forward, explained matters to the audience, apologized and offered to substitute "*Douglas*" for "*The Duke of Milan.*" But the audience, who would have no such thing, sat through the farce and waited patiently.

Then the manager came forward with a pathetic story. Mr. Kean, in his anxiety to fulfil his engagement at the theatre, had met with a carriage accident, and was lying seriously ill at Deptford with a dislocated collar-bone. The audience then permitted the substitute play, and filed out of the theatre afterwards with concern and pity writ large upon their faces. Meanwhile Mrs. Kean had been told, and to the great consternation of the conspirators, for of course the whole story was a fabrication, insisted upon setting off for Deptford at once. Arrived there she found her husband in the throes of a magnificent piece of acting, which completely deceived her.

carria
acc

He was gently lifted into a conveyance and carried home, but once safely within the four walls of his own home the "gaff was blown," and he waved his injured arm in a manner that at first frightened his poor wife out of her wits. The next day, feeling that some sort of an apology was due to his public, Kean wrote and caused to be published a little speech, which did more credit to his head than his heart. It was so cleverly worded that it bore whatever construction the reader cared to put upon it.

This incident shows the sort of life and companionship that Kean loved. Contrary to Garrick he hated the tables of the great and noble, the only one of whom he could tolerate was Byron. And even he, nobleman and genius that he was, had to play second fiddle to a company of prize-fighters. Kean was invited to a complimentary dinner, at which Byron was to be president, to be given to Lord Kinnaird, then recently returned from Greece. Kean at first refused, owing to a previous engagement, but Byron would accept no excuse, and the tragedian turned up with a very bad grace. After dinner was over and the "convivialities" were about to begin, Kean's chair was discovered to be empty. He had managed to slip out unobserved. Imagine an actor of his position being able, or willing, to slip out unobserved! Byron and Douglas Kinnaird at once went in pursuit, and after trying various suspected haunts ran the fugitive to ground in Cribb's tavern, where he was presiding at a dinner to "The Fancy"! To clinch matters, just as Byron and Kinnaird entered, his glass was raised in a toast to the "damnation of all lords." Byron was so offended at this slight that he would not speak to Kean for many days, but the wonderful performance of *Sir Giles Overreach* bridged the chasm, and when Kean explained that Cribb's had really been a previous engagement, the breach was healed.

Another story relates that on being advised by a certain noble lord to give up certain humble, if not disreputable, friends, if he desired the homage that was his due, Kean declined, with much spirit, to think of doing so.

He was, in fact, a Bohemian of Bohemians. It was useless to expect him to be anything else, and those who worshipped his genius for its own sake were the first to recognize this.

The third season at Drury Lane was followed by another provincial tour which opened at Bath, in which town he made his first appearance, according to some as *Richard III*, to others as *Shylock*. He subsequently went to Edinburgh, and there his wonderful acting completely broke through popular prejudice. Edinburgh is a conservative city in these matters, and it did not willingly let go its hold upon the stately, cold ghost of John Philip Kemble. Consequently Kean's *Richard* was at first received very quietly, but as the play wore on his audience became more and more excited, and at the close every doubt and classic scruple was overcome and his triumph was complete. As *Sir Giles Overreach*, his success was even more striking. The house was in a state of frenzy and refused to let the play continue to its natural termination, but insisted on the curtain being dropped after Kean's final exit, which improper proceeding had had its precedent at Bath.

Subsequently, as the result of a performance of "*Macbeth*" in Edinburgh, Kean was presented by several of the most distinguished inhabitants of that critical city with a magnificent Highland sword or claymore. Sir John Sinclair made the presentation, and in the letter accompanying it pointed out that there was some evidence to prove that Shakespeare had himself visited Scotland, and incidentally the castle of Dunsinane. Hence it was quite possible he had studied the Macbethian legend on the spot, and improved upon it dramatically, for tradition records that Macbeth was not slain by Macduff, but realizing the odds against him committed suicide by jumping over a precipice. The next few seasons of Kean's career at Drury Lane were marked by many new parts, but few striking successes, excepting *Sir Edward*

Mortimer in "*The Iron Chest*," which was produced on 23rd November, 1816. The character of the remorse-stricken baronet was reckoned as one of Kean's greatest, and ranked side by side with his *Sir Giles Overreach*. "*The Iron Chest*" had been preceded on 28th October by a production of "*Timon of Athens*," Timon in which Kean of course played *Timon*, but neither play nor actor were a very great success. In *Oroonoko* Kean challenged comparison with, but does not seem to have upset, the Garrick tradition. In "*Paul and Virginia*," which was only played once, Kean as *Paul* proved himself a charming and natural singer. He had indeed a strain of real music in his composition, and had time and circumstances permitted might have been a good musician. In December, 1817, he played *Richard, Duke of York*, in Merivale's wretched concoction from the three parts of Shakespeare's "*King Henry VI.*" At the beginning of this year the management of Covent Garden were under the impression that they had unearthed a worthy rival to Kean in Junius Brutus Booth. This young actor, who modelled himself upon Kean, was marvellously like him in appearance and, many averred, his equal in talent. On 20th February he had the opportunity to prove his claims, for he appeared at Drury Lane as *Iago* to Kean's *Othello*. The result was a complete victory on the part of the elder tragedian, who played *Othello* as he had never played it before, and literally "acted Booth off the stage." Some of those who played with him at this performance said that his acting was the most terrifying thing they had ever experienced. Kean, diminutive though he was, seemed to tower over *Iago*, shook him and tossed him aside as a terrier might a rat, and *Othello* became a one-part play for that night. It is a pity that the *Desdemona* of the occasion has not left any reminiscences. As a result of this duel, Booth returned to Covent Garden, and was fortunate enough to find them willing to resume the contract which he had broken by his appearance at Drury Lane. At Covent Garden his popularity soon waned, especially when cast for original characters and unable to model himself on Kean. He ended his days in America, when he divided his time between acting and market gardening. He would sometimes entertain his employées by performances of *Richard III* and *Sir Giles Overreach*, after the manner of Kean. Other rivals, of whom the most notable was Conway, were repeatedly brought forward to challenge Kean, who, now that John Philip Kemble had retired, held undisputed sway as monarch of the stage. One and all they passed into oblivion. But there was a young man called Macready coming along, who, though he never had the hardihood to consider himself Kean's rival, became in course of time his very worthy successor.

In 1818 Kean created the character of *Selim* in his friend Byron's "*Bride of Abydos*." The play was adapted to the stage by Dimond, but it was not a success, nor was Penley's adaptation of Marlowe's "*Jew of Malta*" produced a few weeks later. Kean incurred severe and deserved censure by reciting in the prologue to this production the line—"Nor wish an Alleyn, while we boast a Kean."

The leading lady at "the Lane" at this time was a Miss Macauley. This young lady had crossed Kean's path nine years previously in Dublin, when she had played *Lady Macbeth* badly enough to ruin his own performance of *Macbeth*.

The theatre had intended to revive "*King John*," with Kean as the King and Miss Macauley as *Constance;* but Kean positively refused to appear on the same stage with her. But he unbent sufficiently to play *Young Norval* in "*Douglas*" to her *Lady Randolph*, when the manifest improvement in the young lady's art induced him to forego his decision, and "*King John*" was revived on 1st June, but was evidently not a very great success, as it was only played three times.

Subsequently Miss Macauley appeared at Drury Lane as *Lady Macbeth*, but not being in a fit condition to play the part was hissed off the stage, and eventually lost to sight amid a shower of epithets, mostly hurled at Edmund Kean.

About this time the great French tragedian Talma visited London, went the round of the theatres, and characterized Kean as a magnificent, uncut gem. "Polish and round him off, and he will be a perfect tragedian!" said he.

Kean returned the compliment at the close of the 1817–18 season. In company with his wife he visited the Continent, saw Talma play *Orestes* in Paris, and told Mrs. Kean that Talma was greater than himself and Kemble put together. At first Mrs. Kean demurred, but as the play wore on began to concur, and Kean did not altogether like it! He was fired with a desire to play in the piece himself, and writing home to the Drury Lane committee begged them to prepare a version of the "*Distressed Mother*" against his return. Then he went on to Switzerland, and there is a quite preposterous legend of his ascending to the summit of Mount Blanc, and a more plausible one of his being entertained by the Monks of St. Bernard in their Hospice. There he found an old spinet and played upon it and sang to the monks, afterwards regaling them with stories and scenes from his own world.

He made his reappearance in London on ~~20th~~ October as *Orestes*, in which he was a bitter disappointment to himself and his public. He admitted that he could make nothing of the character. But this failure was soon atoned for by his success in a character for which many would have thought him little suited. On 3rd December he appeared as *Lucius Junius Brutus* in Howard Payne's "*Brutus.*" In this he was considered by many to have fairly beaten John Philip Kemble on his own ground.

Ore

Br

"*Brutus*" should have been succeeded by Charles Bucke's tragedy of "*The Italians.*" But when Kean read the play to the company in the green-room it was found to be quite unactable, and he positively refused to play in it, being willing rather to pay the forfeit of £1000. Consequently the production was shelved. Meantime Bucke published the play with a preface sternly denouncing Kean, to whose jealous machinations he attributed its non-production. Kean replied by a letter to the newspapers, and then ensued a paper war worthy of the days of Garrick. Kean's letter evoked the severe censure of no less a personage than Sir Walter Scott, who wrote to Southey, in a letter that does not do him much credit, "How would you, or how do you think I could, relish being the object of such a letter as Kean wrote t'other day to a poor author, who, though a pedantic blockhead, has at least the right to be treated as a gentleman by a copper-laced, twopenny learmouth, rendered mad by conceit and success?"

The play was, however, at last produced on 3rd

April, Rae playing the part intended for Kean. The performance proceeded with much disturbance, which did not, however, obscure the fact that "*The Italians*" was a very bad play. It was withdrawn after the second performance, and Kean's critical judgment, if not his conduct, was justified.

The latter was getting more and more unbearable, and Kean certainly seemed about to be rendered mad by success, if not by conceit.

About this time the Drury Lane committee had the audacity and effrontery, according to Kean, to offer him the part of *Joseph Surface*. He returned it with scorn, saying he never had, never did, and never would play "seconds." It is certainly a curious fact that even in his strolling days, he had always played "lead." He poured out the vials of his wrath upon the committee and upon Douglas Kinnaird, who had written the fatal letter offering him the part. Just at this time, too, he was endeavouring to bring off negotiations which would leave him sole manager and lessee of the theatre, but they fell through, and eventually Elliston became the manager. He was preceded by Stephen Kemble, who appears to have been a thoroughly inefficient member of that efficient family, his one and only claim to fame being that he played *Falstaff*, without padding, to Kean's *Hotspur*. Apparently his stomach was the only real thing about his performance. Kean was very successful as *Hotspur*.

Kean and Elliston had got over their early tiffs and were now fast friends, and under the banner of Elliston Kean was now to make his last triumph. On 24th April, 1820, he appeared for the first time as *Lear* and took the town by storm. A pæan of praise followed his performance from all the critics, with one exception, curiously enough Hazlitt, who had hitherto been his greatest trumpeter. But time has rather endorsed Hazlitt's opinion. And Hazlitt was in no state of mind to enthuse much ① To begin with, Kean played Nahum Tate's wretched, garbled version of the play, a version which had done duty for many years and many great actors, including Betterton and Garrick. Hazlitt had made great efforts, with the help of a third party, to induce Kean to forego this version. ② Secondly, he had a pet theory that to enact *Lear* successfully was beyond human power. ③ Thirdly, he was suffering so severely at this time from the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" that he may have become embittered and exaggerated in his judgment. He described Kean's rendering of the curse as a piece of rant, but it is hard to credit this, when one realizes what Kean's powers were in this direction. But even Hazlitt was moved to eulogy at the prayer when, to use his own words, Kean "threw himself on his knees, lifted up his arms like withered stumps; threw his head quite back, and in that position, as if severed from all that held him to society, breathed a heart-struck prayer, like the figure of a man obtruncated"—it was worthy of himself and the character.

"*Lear*" was produced simultaneously at Covent Garden, where Kean was rivalled by Booth, but that young gentleman neither added to his own reputation nor detracted from Kean's. But shortly afterwards his one worthy rival, indeed one who outstripped him in some parts, was found in Macready. Both houses produced "*Virginius*." Drury Lane did Soane's version, and Covent Garden Sheridan Knowles'. Macready's *Virginius* was acknowledged by every one to be superior to Kean's, who undoubtedly had not the right temperament to fit himself to this somewhat artificial drama.

Our hero was now at the very zenith of his career, and decided upon following the customary course and paying a visit to America. But before setting out Elliston arranged that he should give the London public an opportunity of seeing him again in all his favourite characters. Not only that, but it was decided that he should show the public how well he could play the fool and the harlequin. On 12th June "*Venice Preserved*" was produced for the first time at Kean's benefit, and he played the part of *Jaffier*, but does not seem to have rivalled Garrick in it.

"*Venice Preserved*" was followed by "*The Admirable Crichton*," in which Kean as *Crichton* had the opportunity to show he could do everything. He sang, he fenced, he danced, he mimicked, but as the time drew near for him to come up through the trap as *Harlequin*, his qualms began. And they were not confined to him alone. Many in the audience had had them. Kean got out of the quandary in a characteristic fashion. Suddenly, whilst dancing, he went dead lame and limped off the stage. The manager came forward and announced that Mr. Kean had sprained his ankle and would be unable to play *Harlequin*, though he would do his best to go on with his part. This he did, and his best was occasionally too good, and most of the audience saw through the little plot, but they were good-natured enough to let the matter rest there.

He appeared for the last time, prior to his departure, on 16th September~~, as *Richard III*~~. He made a touching little speech to the audience, with a characteristic remark to the effect that they might never see him again! (Cries of "No, no! No, no!") Kean was nothing if not dramatic! Then he gave a farewell supper to his fellow-actors, and afterwards set off for Liverpool in great style, travelling in a post-chaise and four. At Liverpool, according to promise, he gave a few performances of his principal parts, was annoyed with the coldness and apathy of his audiences, and told them as much to their faces, before finally setting sail for America.

His first appearance in New York was made on 29th November, 1820, as *Richard III.* Although there were some carping criticisms, he repeated the success of his original season in London. The theatre was besieged, morning, noon, and night, with such a seething crowd, that special arrangements had to be made for selling seats by auction.

The surplus premiums were given to the local hospitals, and in this way the nightly takings averaged over two thousand dollars. Hitherto, half that amount per week had been considered good business. From New York Kean went to Boston and Philadelphia, where a repetition of his colossal New York success awaited him. But on his return visit to Boston an unfortunate thing happened, the beginning of a long series of them. Kean reopened in Boston during the dead season, when everybody was out of town. The first two nights the audiences were sufficiently meagre seriously to annoy him. The third night, when he was advertised to appear as *Richard III*, there were barely twenty people in the house. Kean was so furious that he refused to appear, and at once left for New York. But the consequences of his behaviour followed close on his heels, and he soon learned how deeply he had offended the Bostonians and, in a degree, incensed all

America against him. He wrote one or two explanatory letters to the papers, but did not much mend matters, and the upshot was that he abandoned his intention of remaining in America for a further year, and determined to return to England.

Two incidents of his visit to New York are especially worthy of record; one is his friendship with Dr. John Francis, a well-known writer, doctor, philanthropist and social lion-tamer. This worthy gentleman, in his work, "The Old New York," gives some interesting and admirable reminiscences of Kean, for whom he professes a profound admiration and respect, both as an actor and as a man. The doctor's sound knowledge and perception not only enabled him to detect the great virtues of the actor, but also that his equally striking vices were due to an abnormal strain in his nature, and not entirely his own fault. At one time Kean expressed to the doctor his wish to visit an American lunatic asylum to see, as he put it, if the American madness resembled that of John Bull. He had been in the habit of visiting English asylums in order to study dementia, especially before playing as *Lear*. Consequently he made a visit to one of the largest asylums in New York, and, accompanied by the doctor and another friend, climbed to the roof, when he promptly announced his intention of ending his life there and then by jumping off, and was with difficulty restrained by the doctor and his friend. However, he soon recovered from his temporary melancholy, and dined and drank that evening in, and doubtless of, the best of spirits! But the incident left its impress upon the doctor, and, viewed in the light of later events, certainly has its significance. Another event of this visit was the erection of a monument to George

Frederick Cooke, one of the greatest of his predecessors. This Kean did at his own expense. Cooke, who in genius, temperament, and spirit seems to have been very like Kean, had died in 1812, and was buried practically "uncoffined and unknelled" in the strangers' burial ground of St. Paul's Church, New York. Kean got permission to remove the remains to a more prominent part of the cemetery, and over them he caused to be erected a monument which consisted of the conventional column supporting an urn. The inscription upon it set forth that the monument was erected to Cooke by Edmund Kean, of Drury Lane, and concluding with the couplet, already quoted,

> "Three kingdoms claim his birth,
> Both hemispheres pronounce his worth,"[1]

a composition of Kean's own, of which he was inordinately proud.

Dr. Francis has furnished a graphic picture of the scene, one after Kean's own heart, of the disinterment and removal of the body.

It was done at night, by the light of the moon. Kean sang mournful songs, recited lugubrious poems, and insisted upon the coffin being opened that he might gaze upon the remains of his great predecessor. But all that was left of him were a few bones. Kean rummaged in the coffin and possessed himself of the forefinger bone of the right hand. This he carried back with him to England and treated with the greatest care and veneration; and altogether made such a ridiculous fuss of it that Mrs. Kean threw it out of the window in disgust, afterwards pretending that it was lost.

The Cooke monument having fallen into disrepair was repaired in the present year, 1912, and the inscription renewed by another distinguished English actor, Mr. Johnston Forbes-Robertson.

---

[1] See *ante*, G. F. COOKE, page 113.

Kean arrived back at Liverpool on the 20th July, and at once wrote to Elliston announcing that he would be back in London on the 23rd.

Elliston took this to mean that he would be willing to play on that date, and when Kean arrived in town he was horrified to find that he was announced to appear as *Richard III* that evening. However, the pomp and magnificence of the reception which Elliston had prepared for his home-coming had put him into a good temper, and he agreed to do his best. He was met on the northern outskirts of London by an imposing procession of carriages, headed by Elliston and followed by various members of the committee and company at "the Lane." In this triumphant manner he returned to the theatre, where the length of the carriage procession was only outdistanced by that of the queue eagerly waiting to welcome him. He drank a glass of brandy, rested for an hour, and stepped upon the stage to ringing plaudits that eloquently told how anxiously they had been awaiting his return. Signs of fatigue were not wanting in his performance, and it was impossible to tell whether his work had deteriorated or improved after his American experience. But when he reappeared on the 26th and played *Othello*, after a good rest, it was apparent that he had lost nothing of his old ability and power. The audience were delirious with delight, and London again settled down to the enjoyment of her idol.

Othello

Kean played no new characters this season, which closed on 5th September; he made his last appearance on 30th October, when he appeared at the special request of Queen Caroline. It was that unfortunate lady's last appearance at the theatre. She was taken ill in her box and died at Hammersmith nine days later.

Kean's eighth season at Drury Lane was not remarkable for any very striking new successes, although he attempted many new parts. It was gradually becoming apparent that although he was a very great actor, and a very accomplished man, he had neither the versatility nor the comprehensive grasp of character of Garrick. As *Don Felix* in "*The Wonder*" he again challenged the memory of that wonderful man, but does not seem to have produced the same effect. There were those still, Mrs. Garrick amongst them, who remembered it.

not
vers

Kean began this season on 12th November with "*Richard III*," and on the 27th appeared for the first time as *De Montfort* in Joanna Baillie's play of that name. The production was not a great success in spite of the time and trouble spent by Kean, not only in studying the principal rôle, but also in revising the play.

Other important new characters that he appeared in this season were *Wolsey* in "*Henry VIII*," *Sir Pertinax McSycophant* in Macklin's "*Man of the World*," and *Hastings* in "*Jane Shore*."

1822

The season was also remarkable for the retirement of Miss Tidswell, which took place on 21st May, after the performance of "*The Wonder*." There was a touching little scene when Kean led forward the actress, who attempted to speak a few faltering words of farewell. In a humble capacity, as a player of small parts, she had served the theatre faithfully and well for forty years. The humble debt that the theatre owed her, as an actress, could not be compared with the enormous debt of gratitude which is owed to her by the whole British Drama. For, it will be remembered, it was she who mothered and housed the little outcast Kean, and first exercised him in the rudiments of his art. She lived on for some years after her retirement, and faithfully nursed her hero in his last sad illness and death.

In the interim between this season and the next Kean played a round of his favourite characters at Dundee, after which he retired to rest in a charming little cottage he had built for himself on the Island of Bute. Here, for a time, he almost seriously contemplated retiring from public life altogether, but his correspondence shows that he had a hankering after London, and presently a letter from Elliston, reminding him that the new season was about to begin, recalled him to town. Elliston, moreover, informed him that another rival, Charles Young, had been engaged for Drury Lane. At first Kean regarded this engagement as an impertinence, but afterwards determined to serve the intruder the same way he had Booth. So he repaired to London to prepare for the fray. This began on 15th November, when Kean played *Othello* to the *Iago* of "A gentleman from Liverpool"—alias Young.

History repeated itself, and Young was as completely outclassed as Booth had been six years previously, with the same result, that he afterwards migrated to Covent Garden. But before doing so he played several more characters with Kean, notably *Pierre* in "*Venice Preserved*," and *Jachimo* to Kean's *Posthumus* in "*Cymbeline*."

The most important event of the season occurred
823 on 10th February, when Kean appeared as *King Lear*,

with the fifth act restored as originally written by Shakespeare. He had wished to do this for many years, and often remarked that London would never really know what he could do until they had seen him over the dead body of *Cordelia*. They had that opportunity now, and some accounts say that their highest expectations were exceeded, that Kean's acting was sublime in its awe-inspiring pathos, and the awe-struck audience forgot to applaud.

Lea

Genest, who never seems to have appreciated Kean, has a different account. He says that Mrs. West, who played *Cordelia*, was too heavy, and when Kean tried to carry away her corpse, he was unable to do so, much to the amusement of the audience, who tittered till the curtain fell. But, knowing the care Kean always took when rehearsing scenes of this description, such a contretemps seems inconceivable. In this revival Young played *Edmund*, and continued to appear with Kean until the close of the season, which ended on 30th June with "*Richard III.*"

After this Kean did a very successful tour in Ireland, winding it up with a visit to Dublin towards the close of September, 1823.

Then, being a little run down in health, he retired for a while to his pretty little retreat on Bute.

His tenth season began on 8th December, as usual, with "*Richard III.*" Young had now returned to Covent Garden, and Macready had come over to "the Lane." Many had hopes that the town would be treated to another duel, but Kean resolutely refused to appear in the same cast with Macready, who, according to him, was not an actor, but a player! Whether Kean was afraid of Macready, or what his real reasons were for refusing to appear with him, will never be known.

To do him justice, he gave Macready his due, and admitted his superiority to himself in certain characters, such as *Caius Gracchus* or *Virginius*, characters which, in his opinion, did not require acting, but only playing!

The only new character he created this season was *The Stranger*, in the play of that name. It was not a great success.

At the close of the season he again went on the Continent and visited Paris and Switzerland, renewing his acquaintance with the good monks at the hospice of St. Bernard, to whom he again played and sang. In their visitors' book he recorded the fact that he had spent with them the happiest day of his life. Such fitful gleams of happiness as that life had held were now fast becoming things of the past, and a cloud was gathering on the horizon. On his return journey he paid what was really a farewell visit to Talma.

The storm-cloud burst soon after his arrival in town in January, 1825. For some years, it appears, he had been carrying on an illicit flirtation with a certain Mrs. Cox, wife of Alderman Cox. This good, or bad, lady had first made Kean's acquaintance in 1818 at Taunton, when she had been so overcome by his performance as *Othello* that she had fainted, and was carried into the tragedian's dressing-room to be restored. The acquaintance thus begun ripened into friendship, and from friendship to love, at any rate on Kean's part.

Mrs. Cox, from all accounts, seems never to have had any real affection for him, but an intrigue with such an open-handed and wealthy actor had profitable possibilities. So thought her husband also, when he found unequivocal proofs of their guilt, and very likely before that, as there is some reason to suppose that he had connived at the situation since not long after its inception. But he was now in desperate straits for money, and here was a good opportunity of making some. He brought an action against Kean, claiming damages to the extent of two thousand guineas. The jury awarded him £800. Kean was a broken man, not only in spirit, but also in his pocket, for he had been in the habit of spending vast sums as fast as he earned them. His behaviour throughout the trial was exemplary and dignified. He made no attempt, as he might have done, to defend himself by a production of Mrs. Cox's letters, nor did he do anything which could reflect upon her more than the situation in which she found herself. But, in spite of the fact that he did all that mortal man could do to atone for himself, the public were bitterly hostile, and when he was foolish enough to make his reappearance at Drury Lane on 24th June January as *Richard III*, a riot ensued, and he was hissed off the stage. It was some weeks before he was able to face an audience and go through his part without interruption.

On 17th February he appeared as *Masaniello* in Soane's play of that name. Unfortunately, the plot bore some resemblance to his own domestic affairs, and he again had to face the displeasure of his audience. [illegible]

His cup of bitterness was now full. Disillusioned by the heartless treatment he had received from Mrs. Cox, who had obviously simply made use of him, separated from his wife and child, who had now left him, he lived all by himself in lodgings in Regent Street. Colley Grattan, who visited him at this period, has drawn a very pathetic picture of the broken-down actor in his misery. He was dreadfully changed, with a red nose, bloated complexion, and bleary eyes. But he sat down to the piano and played and sang so exquisitely and sadly that Grattan declared he never heard anything like it before or since. Soon afterwards Kean went on a tour through Scotland, where his reception was everywhere turbulent and unforgiving. Then he went to Manchester, and from thence to Dublin, where they were kind enough to forget the peccadilloes of the player's private life in the splendour of his public performances.

But he was getting very sick of it all, and announced his intention of retiring to America, never to return. He had a farewell benefit at Drury Lane on 17th July, 1825, when he appeared as *Frederick* in "*Of Age Tomorrow*," then set out for Liverpool.

He made a few appearances in that city, was very well received, and in a speech on the last night he told his audience that he had been driven from England by the machinations of scoundrels. He then set sail for America.

His second American season commenced on 14th November, 1825, at the Park Theatre, New York, when he appeared as *Richard*. Unfortunately the story of his domestic escapades had preceded him, and also that of his mixed receptions in England. The Americans were not to be outdone by the English in self-righteousness, and his appearance was the occasion of such a tumultuous uproar of mixed feelings that he was unable to proceed with his part.

The next day he wrote a somewhat abject letter to the "New York National Advocate," in which he abased himself in a manner he could not have done ten years before. New York were appeased, and allowed him to continue playing. His acting, though it had lost some of its early force and brilliancy, was still far superior to that of any one else, and he continued to amass fame and fortune.

Then he proceeded to Boston, but that city, whilst not above nursing resentment at the slight he had offered them at his former visit, was too eminently moral to be able to tolerate such a being in their midst. His appearance on the stage was the signal for a murderous attack on him, and had he not fled from the theatre and taken refuge in a neighbouring house, there was every likelihood that he might have been lynched. Later on, the house in which he lay hidden was threatened by the mob, and for the sake of its inmates he left it. He was smuggled out of Boston and returned to New York. Subsequently he went on a tour in the United States and Canada, occasionally encountering very mixed receptions which, however, generally became very unanimous after tasting the quality of his art. At Quebec an honour was accorded him which was one of the brightest gleams in the sad twilight of his career. Some Huron Indians were so struck with his acting that they requested the honour of admitting him to their tribe. To this Kean assented with the greatest glee. He was made a chief under the title of "Alanienoidet." He acquired a complete outfit of the dress, and his friend Dr. Francis relates an amusing anecdote of his receiving an urgent summons to visit the great Indian chief, Alanienoidet. The worthy doctor hastened to the hotel and was shown into a large, dimly-lighted room, at the end of which was a platform rising from a jungle of palms, trees, foliage, etc. On the platform was a throne, and on the throne a most gorgeous apparition. It was armed with bow and arrows and a tomahawk. Its dress consisted of skins richly beaded and decorated, mocassins on its feet, and a plume of feathers on its head. Long black hair streamed down its back. Two black eyes gleamed like coals of fire from the midst of features plentifully striped and streaked with ochre and vermilion. As the good doctor approached, wondering who this mighty chief might be, the vision stepped down from its throne with ineffable grace and dignity, and the first rich tones of its greeting told the doctor that it was Kean, mightily delighted with the effect he had produced.

At another time during his visit Kean is said to have been shut up as a lunatic, but there is not very trustworthy evidence of this. But there is, unfortunately, very good reason to suppose that much suffering and drinking were unhinging his mind, and that he was subject to occasional attacks of insanity. The incident of his meditating suicide on the roof of the asylum, mentioned earlier in this paper, occurred some time during this visit.

Kean had made up his mind that he would never return to England, but he began to feel home-sick and long for his beloved "Lane," so he packed up his traps, not forgetting all his Indian paraphernalia and war-paint, and set sail for home. If he had been longing for England, England had been longing for him, and the night of the 8th of January, 1827, was a memorable one in the theatrical annals of this country. The house was packed to suffocation, all was forgotten and forgiven, the audience scarcely listened to the opening of the play, which was "*The Merchant of Venice*," and on *Shylock's* entrance a shout went up which could have been heard all over London. Stimulated by the applause and the situation Kean gave a perfect performance, never before surpassed for its brilliancy, intensity, and force. But whilst the fifth act was still in process the worn-out tragedian was stretched on a bed at his hotel, very nearly dead with the exertion the night had cost him.

"*The Merchant of Venice*" was followed at intervals by "*Othello*" and "*Richard III*," and although it was becoming apparent that Kean was no longer the man he once was, his performances were still unrivalled, and drew enormous houses.

It was thought that he might attempt a new character, and Mr. Colley Grattan came forward with his tragedy "*Ben Nazir, the Saracen.*" Kean took to it enthusiastically, and welcomed the opportunity of confirming his regained position as head of the stage. He took the part away to study it. One day the author visited him at the Hummum's Hotel, and found him sitting up in bed dressed in all his Huron war-paint, brandishing a tomahawk in one hand and a glass of wine in the other. Two seedy-looking "braves" stood near, and an artist was busy painting the group. Kean at first scowled upon Grattan, shook his tomahawk at him, and snorted and grunted after the approved manner of an Indian chief. Then he threw aside the tomahawk, doffed the feathered cap, and shook the author warmly by the hand, producing from under his pillow his part of *Ben Nazir*. About this time he appeared again at "the Lane" as *The Stranger*, but merely walked through the part, with here and there an occasional flash of his old genius. Then he played a short season in Dublin, during which time poor Grattan was on tenterhooks in London, and afterwards returned to Drury Lane, appearing on 10 May as *Othello*. Meanwhile, rehearsals of "*Ben Nazir*" proceeded apace. Kean announced himself as word-perfect in his part, and asked and received permission to absent himself from rehearsals the better to study the character of it. He only appeared at two rehearsals, each time with his part in his hand. But one of his readings was so magnificent as to raise everybody's hopes to the highest pitch. The author watched over him like a detective, and was delighted with his assiduous industry and hard work. Sometimes he would go to Kensington Gardens, where he would study for a couple of hours. At others he would row on the river in his boat, spouting the part and giving the watermen a free treat. He would also work at night, but always went to bed in good time—*and sober!* At length the fateful, and as it turned out, fatal, day arrived. In the morning Grattan visited Kean in his lodgings, where he found him strolling about in his gorgeous robes, spouting and playing the part with great spirit and, alas—*the book in his hand.* The author was very anxious, but Kean was confident, and his confidence allayed Grattan's anxiety a little. But although he was almost certain to be imperfect, the chances were that he would remember most of it and get quite carried away in the principal scenes, and any lesser lapses would be remedied at subsequent performances. So the author took heart of grace and leave of Kean.

The less said about the performance of that evening the better. Kean could not remember two consecutive sentences of his part and, to quote the author's own description, "gave the notion of a man who had been half-hanged and then dragged through a horse-pond." He struggled through to the end of the play, ruining not only his own part, but those of his fellow-actors, and the curtain fell in dead silence. Wallack, the manager, came forward and made an apology on Kean's behalf, and an appeal on the play's. But the audience were too disgusted to listen to either, and filed slowly and silently out of the theatre.

The author went round on to the stage and found Kean being supported to his dressing-room by his servant and another person. The actor hung down his head, and in accents of deep sorrow and remorse said, "I have ruined a fine play and myself. I cannot look you in the face." Grattan, whose compassion exceeded his sense of injury, attempted some consolatory words, but Kean passed to his dressing-room like a dead thing.

It was now obvious that the tragedian could never again create a new character, but it was thought he might still be able to repeat some of his old ones, and "*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*," "*Othello*," "*Richard III*," were all revived, and there was still enough of the old fire left to compel the audience to forgive and forget "*Ben Nazir*." Kean brought his season to an end with "*Richard III*," at the close of which performance, with characteristic recklessness and generosity, he gave Miss Smithson £50 for her admirable playing of *Lady Anne*.

He now had a serious quarrel with his son Charles. Already estranged from his wife, who was living, sick and ill, in lodgings in Ryder Street, St. James's, he was very anxious about Charles's future, and determined, above all things, that he should not go on the stage. So by the kind offices of Mr. Calcraft, M.P., a member of the Drury Lane committee, he procured the offer of a cadetship in the East India Company's Service, and young Charles was sent for from Eton and acquainted with the provision that had been made for his future. To the infuriated father's dismay and disgust Charles resolutely refused to go out to India, except with the assurance that his mother was to be provided for to the tune of £400 a year. This Kean was unable to promise, and so Charles was sent back to Eton to complete the "half," after which his father cast him off. How he fared we shall see in a later chapter.

Almost simultaneously with the quarrel with his son, Kean quarrelled with the Drury Lane management and went over to Covent Garden, where he made his first appearance on 15th October, 1827, under the management of Charles Kemble. He remained there for the season, playing all his most famous parts, but not venturing any new ones. In May, 1828, he went over to Paris and played "*Richard III*" at the Théâtre français, but his methods were too upsetting to the French tradition and were not appreciated, excepting in the last scene and death of *Richard*, which for the moment startled the Parisians into forgetfulness of their cherished conservatism. But all the same, his visit was sufficient to inspire Alexandre Dumas to a play, "*Kean, ou Désordre et Génie*," produced eight years later at the Porte Sainte Martin Theatre. During his little trip to Paris he paid a pious pilgrimage to the grave of Talma in Père Lachaise, and is said to have cut the inscription "*Tu vivras*—E. Kean," on the tombstone, but no traces of it remain! At the close of his visit he hired himself a yacht and sailed to his beloved Bute. His son Charles, after having made an unsuccessful first appearance at Drury Lane, was now on tour and came to play in Glasgow, whilst his father was in Bute. Father and son became reconciled, and Charles visited the cottage. His acting had now much improved, and on the 1st October the father consented to play at his son's benefit. Kean played *Brutus* to his son's *Titus* in "*Brutus, or the Fall of Tarquin.*" As may be imagined, the benefit was a bumper. There was over £300 in the house. Kean, invigorated and strengthened by his holiday, played magnificently; ~~Charles supported him extremely~~ well, and Kean's delivery on his son's neck of the lines "Pity thy wretched father," stirred the audience to their very depths. There was not a dry eye in the house, the applause was frantic, and Kean whispered to his son, "We are doing the trick, Charles!"

Kean remained at Bute till October when he returned to London, opening at Covent Garden on the 13th in "*Richard III.*" On 15th December he made another attempt at a new character, and appeared for the first time as *Virginius* in Sheridan Knowles' version of that play. Fortunately the contretemps of "*Ben Nazir*" was not repeated. Fortified by careful nursing and his holidays, Kean was enabled to give an extremely fine and noble rendering, which delighted his audience and himself. He continued playing some of his old parts, but in January, 1829, he became so ill that he had to bring his season to an end and retire to his highland home, as many thought, to die. But after a long bout of distressing illness he rallied surprisingly, and went for a tour in Ireland, where, in Belfast, Cork and Dublin he played all his old favourites, supported by his son Charles, now rapidly becoming an excellent actor. The son's rapid improvement in his calling was now a source of the greatest pleasure to his father. After this tour Kean again returned to Bute, with a young visitor, one Master Beverly, an artist and son of one of Kean's old managers, with whom, in early days, he had had a severe quarrel. Beverly was the

another
at a

manager who turned Edmund Kean and Mary Chambers out of his company when they married, saying Miss Chambers was no longer any use to him, and all the romance of Kean, as a public "draw, was gone now he was married." The friendship with his son seems to indicate that Kean's vindictiveness was less than it used to be. Kean thoroughly enjoyed the young man's society, and is said to have pathetically remarked that if he always had him with him, he might be saved yet. Dr. Doran draws a pathetic picture of the young artist sitting at the window painting the exquisite views of the Clyde, while Kean sits within, at the piano, playing some of his favourite songs, and singing them in the beautiful singing voice from which the sweetness never departed.

Music was a great solace to Kean right up till the close of his life, and it was a comfort to his friends to see and hear him at the piano, singing one of Moore's tender Irish melodies. He was then always at his best. Towards the close of the year he heard of the great success that was being made by Fanny Kemble at Covent Garden, and of the special performances that were being given to save the theatre from insolvency. Kean wrote and offered his services gratis. His offer was gladly accepted, but unfortunately the nights he chose were those upon which the theatre had already made unalterable arrangements. Kean turned his back upon the theatre in a huff, and transferred his services to Drury Lane, where he was to have appeared on 1st December, but Charles Kemble had the bad taste to get an injunction restraining him from playing. The injunction was removed the following day and he appeared as *Richard III.* He continued to make frequent appearances in his old characters, and on 8th March, 1830, he attempted a new character, appearing for the first time as *Henry V*, and for the last time in a new part. The performance was a dreadful failure. He broke down utterly, could not remember his words, and was forced to come down to the footlights and apologize for his want of memory. But this failure in the new part spurred him to fresh efforts in the old ones. It was followed by some matchless performances of *Othello*, *Shylock* and *Hamlet*. Whilst actually playing, Kean seemed to have a return of all his old fire and force, but behind the scenes things were very different, and Barry Cornwall gives us a pathetic description of the "Last of the Plantagenets," sitting bent double in his arm-chair in the wings, fortifying himself with hot brandy and water, and railing savagely at his servant if it was not hot or strong enough. But at the sound of his cue he would rise from his chair, straighten himself out, and go through his part with some semblance of his old-time force and vigour.

new

About this time he accepted an engagement to play two nights at the Surrey Theatre for £100. On the first night he played *Richard*, on the second *Othello*, supported by one Cobham, who some years before had made a futile attempt to rival Kean by playing *Richard* at Covent Garden. His performance had been so bad that the audience would not allow him to finish it, and he had retired from the West End to become the idol of the East. The costers of the New Cut regarded Kean as they might have done a bruiser from another district attempting to challenge the local champion, and were characteristically outspoken in their opinions. Kean repaid them with interest, and characterized them to their faces as "ignorant, unmitigated brutes." He retired in an uproar, which was only quelled by Cobham's going on and rubbing the soft-soap of flattery on his thin-skinned, but thick-headed, patrons.

In June, 1830, Kean appeared at the Haymarket for practically the first time for four-and-twenty years.

He only played four times, and then contemplated a return to the United States, if only to revisit his old friend Dr. Francis, and, as he expressed it, to show "those damned Boston people he was not afraid to appear before them again." Consequently, a great farewell benefit was arranged for him, and he was announced to appear in an act of each of his five greatest characters.

The performance took place at the Haymarket Theatre on a sultry evening in July. The scene outside the doors beggars description. A seething crowd, not one-tenth of which could have been contained within the whole theatre, much less only the pit and gallery, fought from early morning till evening outside the doors.

Women and men were overcome and fainted. It was fortunate that no one was killed. A foreigner, who tried in vain to get admission, described the scene as worse than anything he had seen, under any circumstances, in any capital in Europe.

There was not spare room for a mouse when the curtain rose. The audience was as brilliant as it was immense. Kean, inspired by the occasion, played magnificently, and it was only at the close of the evening that the effects of his performances began to tell upon him. In place of a speech he took farewell of the audience in a few halting words. Then the curtain fell on what was probably the last occasion on which he exhibited anything like his old powers.

He then retired to Bute to make preparations for his departure, but became so seriously ill that the projected visit to America had to be abandoned. The following January he left his island home for the last time, to play a new season at Drury Lane.

He made his appearance as *Richard III* to a crowded house on 31st January, 1831. The best that can be said of his performance was that it was reminiscent, in places, of his former grandeur. Hearing that the lease of the Richmond Theatre was in the market, he acquired it, and also a little cottage next door, where he now took up his residence, the journeys to and from Bute having become too much for him. He often acted at the Richmond Theatre, but not always with great success. It is said that once when he appeared the takings amounted to little over £3. The fact was, he appeared too often. He was now rapidly breaking up, ate very little and drank a great deal. He made fitful appearances at Drury Lane and the Haymarket, for which he was always paid at the rate of £50 a night. But his pecuniary affairs were harassing him, creditors were crowding round him, and he was further annoyed by the behaviour of a troublesome mistress called Ophelia! But her reign was soon over, and she was replaced by faithful old Miss Tidswell, who now came and nursed him till the end. On 12th March, 1833, he made, though unconscious of it at the time, his last appearance at Drury Lane, playing *Richard III.* Previously to this, on 26th November, 1832, he appeared for the first time with Macready, playing *Othello* to that fine actor's *Iago*. It was a dim reminiscence of the old duel with Booth and Young, but except in an occasional outburst here and there, Kean was no longer able to assert his old supremacy, and Macready did not share the fate of Booth and Young. He recorded that he detested playing with Kean, whom he described as "that low man." He said that Kean would always keep "up stage" a little, that he might get the full advantage of the rake, and tower over his opponent. Moreover, he kept his full face to the audience, and used every trick and artifice he knew of to keep Macready in profile.

Kean's last appearance was made at Covent Garden on 25th March, 1833, when he played *Othello* to his son's *Iago*. Kean was in dire straits for money; the performance was much advertised, and a bumper house resulted. Kean arrived at the theatre dreadfully weak and ill. He had to be assisted from his carriage to his dressing-room. He gave orders for Charles to be immediately sent to him on arrival. On entering the dressing-room Charles found his father crouched over the fire looking a terrible wreck. "I am very ill, Charlie," he said, "and afraid I shall be unable to act." Hot brandy and water was sent for, and under the influence of this, his son's presence, and the manager's cheery kindness, he declared himself very much better and allowed himself to be dressed for the part. Supported on his son's arm he went down to the wings. It was plain to the other actors that he was in a very bad way, and every one was very anxious.

Charles was very kindly greeted on his entrance as *Iago*, but the audience were waiting for his father, and when he appeared with his son in the second scene the whole house roared its welcome. Kean bowed again and again, tears filled his eyes; then with a movement of that extraordinary grace, which still survived, led his son forward and, as it were, presented him to the public as a king might a Prince of Wales.

The vast audience rose as one man, the play stood still, hats were thrown into the air, and a scene of the wildest enthusiasm followed. But it was speedily damped. When the play was at last allowed to proceed, it was soon seen that the once great tragedian was in no condition to be playing at all. His gait was feeble, his movements painfully slow, and the remains of his once magnificent voice sometimes died away, out of sheer weakness, into a whisper. The audience hoped against hope, thinking that perhaps he was reserving himself for the great third act. He had no such illusions himself, but was well aware that his indomitable will was at last beginning to succumb to his paralysing weakness. He was, however, somewhat cheered by the great improvement noticeable in his son's acting. "Charles is getting on, he is playing very well to-night; I suppose it's because he's acting with me," he said as he came off after the first act. He then helped himself copiously to hot brandy and water to sustain him for the second, but his strength repeatedly failed him and the length of his pauses terrified his audience. As the third act drew near he was getting painfully apprehensive about himself, and said to his son, "Mind you keep before me, Charles. I don't know if I shall be able to kneel, but if I do, be sure that you lift me up."

The curtain rose on the third act, and he struggled bravely on to the great farewell speech, which he spoke with such melancholy sadness, sweetness, and depth of unutterable feeling that the audience, feeling he had come into his own again, burst into a frenzy of applause. At its close Kean was seen to be standing stock still, as though paralysed, his head sunk upon his chest, his eye glazed. It seemed as if he realized in himself the full force of the words, "Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!" He looked like a man who had had a paralytic stroke. An agony of fear seized upon the audience, but Kean pulled himself together and strove to continue. He tottered towards *Iago* (how painfully unlike the olden days), and began, "Villain, be sure—you—prove——" Then in a twinkling it was all over, and the distracted audience saw the father clinging round his son's neck, and heard him murmur, "Oh, God, I am dying. Speak to them, Charles." But Charles was unable to say a word. With the assistance of another actor he carried his father from the stage, and the public saw the last of their great actor.

He was laid upon the sofa in his dressing-room in an unconscious state, with doctors and friends standing round, and expecting every minute that the faint, fitful breathing would cease altogether. But towards evening he rallied a little, and was taken to the Wrekin Tavern, hard by, where for some days he lay between life and death. Then he rallied again, sufficiently to be taken home to Richmond, to the tender, loving care of the devoted Miss Tidswell, and his secretary, John Lee.

So untiring were her administrations that many thought that Miss Tidswell was Kean's mother. The local practitioner who attended him was one of these. But one day he met Nance Carey in the cottage, and the remarkable likeness was unmistakable. Miss, or should one say Mistress, Carey, had at her own importunate request, immediately complied with, taken up her residence at Richmond, together with her worthless son Henry Darnley and his family.

Charles Kean, who was still playing at Covent

Garden, visited his father every day. Only his wife was needed to complete the family circle, and Charles effected a reconciliation. Kean wrote the following manly and straightforward letter to his wife :—

"My dear Mary,

"Let us be no longer fools. Come home; forget and forgive. If I have erred, it was my head, not my heart, and most severely have I suffered for it. My future life shall be employed in contributing to your happiness, and you, I trust, will return that feeling by a total obliteration of the past.

"Your wild, but really affectionate husband,

"EDMUND KEAN."

Mrs. Kean at once hastened to his side, but the shock at beholding his condition was so great that she broke down completely. Edmund took her hand, and endeavouring to be cheerful, said, "Come, cheer up. Happiness shall yet be ours." But that was not to be in this world.

Though unable to live in the cottage with its varied crew, Mrs. Kean was now continually at her husband's side. As the year wore on and spring began to come he appeared to get better. On one occasion he even managed to rise from his bed, cover himself with a racoon's skin, and go into the next room, where he was found smoking and trying to play the piano. Many friends came to see him, and he was always glad when Charles brought his theatrical friends. He liked talking shop, and sometimes he would delight them with little recitations, extracts from some of his old speeches, and so on. He would recite the Lord's Prayer in a manner that drew tears to every eye. He was fond of reading, and his bed was always piled up with books, amongst which, generally hidden carefully out of sight, were a Bible and a missal.

But as the weeks wore on he became convinced that his death was near, and when the famous Dr. Douchez drove down to see him one day early in May, he thanked him for his kindness, but said he felt that the hand of death was upon him, and burst into tears.

Attacks of mental aberration and delirium now became more frequent. During these he would fight his life's and his stage battles over again. Now he was playing in barns, now trudging from the end of the country to the other, along dreary roads. Anon he was plodding his way through the snow to Drury Lane, then facing the audience, frantic now with enthusiasm, now with fury. It is said that in all the ravings and conversations of his delirium he never once mentioned the name of the woman whose callousness was the blackest thing in his life, and probably the initial cause of all his troubles.

It would seem that his determination to keep his mouth shut and not give her away was one of the strongest things about him. The end came on the 15th May. All the previous day and night he had been in a lethargic state, but in the morning he woke, smiled faintly upon the friends beside his bed, strove to utter a few words, took their hands, and passed peacefully away.

An application was made to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey to bury him beside Garrick, but they refused on the ground, it is said, that the customary fees could not be guaranteed. To do them justice, this paltry reason was probably not the real one. Kean had furnished them with only too many stronger ones. At the same time it seems almost a pity that the greatness of such a life should not have been considered to have outweighed the rest. He was buried at Richmond, close to Burbage, the great contemporary actor of Shakespeare, and original creator of most of Kean's famous rôles. The little town of Richmond, as it then was, had long taken the great tragedian—with all his faults a kindly, generous man—to its heart. Every shop was closed, every blind drawn, as the procession wound its way to the old parish church. The pall-bearers were Messrs. Macready, Harley, Dunn, Braham, Farren, and Cooper, and men of note in all branches of art and science followed the coffin. Members of the theatrical profession came from all parts of the kingdom, and the little town was packed with mourners from his great public. At the post-mortem the doctors remarked upon the beautiful development of Kean's chest, lungs, and throat.

The townsfolk wished to put up a public memorial to him in the church, but Charles Kean intimated his own intention of doing so privately. Consequently a tablet was erected in the church, consisting of a medallion portrait and the following inscription :—

EDMUND KEAN.
DIED MAY 15, 1833,
AGED 46.
A MEMORIAL ERECTED BY HIS SON,
CHARLES JOHN KEAN.
1839.

So passed this truly great actor, and in many ways great man. He was followed to the grave in a very few days by his heartless mother, who seems to have dogged his footsteps even in death. He died deeply in debt, and very shortly after his death his effects in Richmond and Bute were sold for the paltry sum of £600, a sum which many of the relics would of themselves fetch in these days.

It seems almost incredible that Kean was only forty-six years old when he died. At the same time it must be remembered that he started life at a very early age, and thus the working years of his life were not so very much behind that of other men. Before he could walk he was earning money for somebody, and when barely in his teens was doing a man's work, with man's responsibilities.

The sacred lamp of the drama never burned more brightly than when entrusted to his care, and if he afterwards extinguished it by his own recklessness, it must be admitted that it has never burned so brightly since.

Philosophers have been very busy with the character of Edmund Kean. We are told that he suffered pre-eminently from the defects of his qualities. That is to say, from certain defects generally supposed to be indissolubly connected with certain qualities.

He was exceptionally sensitive. He himself used to say that he could see or feel a sneer across Salisbury Plain. The very sensitiveness that was the cause of so much suffering was the cause also of much happiness, for it was that that enabled him to portray with such intensity of feeling the passions of human nature. He would lose himself in a part. It is said that he absolutely forgot his own personality and became absorbed in that which he was acting, in which case he was not an actor but an assimilator! Then, it is urged, this very absorption became so much a part of his existence, that he was utterly unable to resist the beginnings or the endings of any passion that whispered themselves in his ear. These two-edged faculties are, we are told, gifts with which he was endowed from his birth, when the same fountains sent forth such sweet and bitter waters.

To cultivate the one he must cultivate the other, and vice versa.

Superficially there may be something in all this, but it is, at best, only a half-truth.

The most reliable evidence we have of Kean's life shows that, like Garrick, he never depended on the inspiration or the emotion of the moment for his effects, but everything was the result of the most unwearied industry and application. Industry was one of the keynotes of Kean's nature. He was another genius with the infinite capacity for taking pains. But he was industrious with one qualification, and that a big one, he was industrious only in the direction which he liked. He was without wisdom, patience, self-sacrifice—indeed, any of the virtues for their own sakes. For the sake of his art he was unwearied in every one of them. He loved his art, and next to his art he loved himself. His vanity and his personal ambition were alike colossal. He was rightly ambitious to give a perfect performance, but he wanted to be the only one to do it. He would not brook a rival, and never had one. He wanted London to see what he could do as *Lear* over the dead body of *Cordelia*, quite as much for his own sake as for London's, Lear's, or Shakespeare's!

He was also proud, and his pride, like his ambition, was doubly developed. His false pride caused him to be hypersensitive and be very quick to take offence. When asked to the houses of the great and noble he refused to go and be stared at, like a wild animal, as he put it. He did not recognize that the invitations were the tributes to his genius. The same false pride, really vanity, led him into his scrape with the Boston audiences, and to make a fool of himself on other occasions when he did not consider himself properly appreciated. He sometimes insulted his audience, as at Birmingham when, as *Sir Giles Overreach*, he gave his daughter's hand to her lover, with the words, "Take her, and the Birmingham audience with her." More justifiable was his insult to the rabble at the Coburg Theatre. On the other hand, to his genuine pride in his art he owed his great opportunity. He knew his own powers, and when his chance came insisted upon their being adequately cast. With him it was "Aut Cæsar aut nullus," and he said as much to the Drury Lane committee when he manfully refused to be put off with a secondary character. Very great strength and force of character must have been required for a half-starved actor, as Kean then was, to hold out against the august committee. But there was never any cringing with Kean. He was totally unlike Garrick in this respect. He never knew when he was beaten, he never admitted defeat, and never suffered it at any hands but his own. And then he went on hitting after he was down, lunging at the air, like his own *Richard III*.

Kean would rather starve, and many a time did, than black the boots of one who had wronged him or spoken slightingly of his profession. Another trait is his outstanding honesty. He was as straight as the day. Even in the trouble that brought about his downfall he was straight, in a way.

He never gave Mrs. Cox away, and he never deceived her or himself. When her faithless perfidy became apparent he was savagely silent, and his savagery was not lessened by his treatment at the hands of a public that daily and hourly condoned greater crimes than his. It would almost seem that they were jealous of his straightforwardness. His silence remained with him even when he was ill and in delirium, and raving about everything but the one thing no one ever heard him speak of.

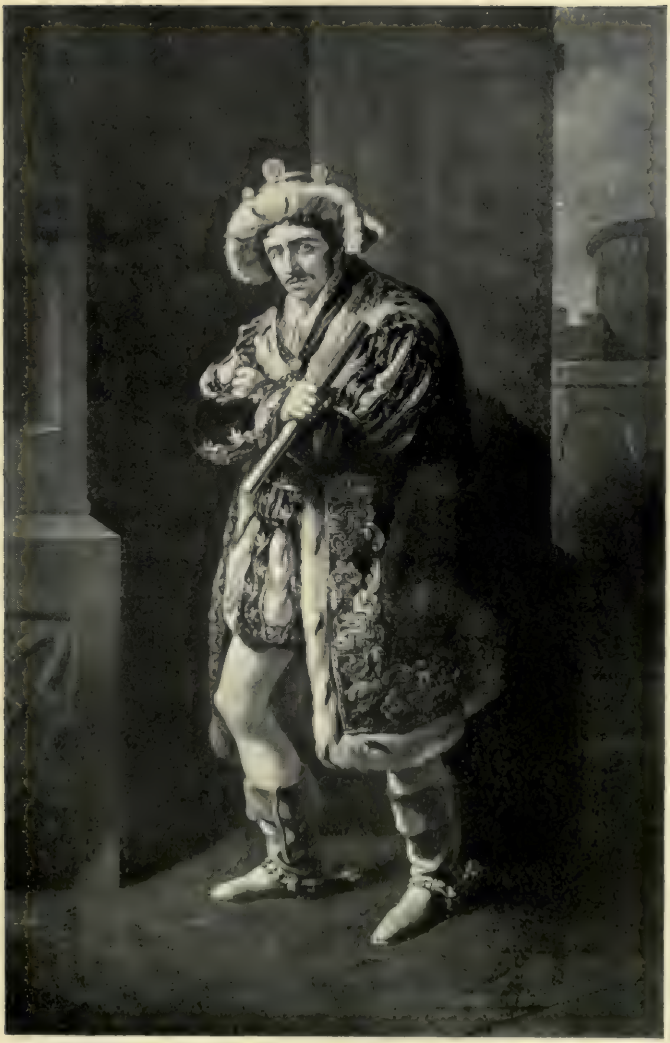
Kean was wildly extravagant. He got through something like a quarter of a million in little over ten years. How he did it no one ever knew. His wife probably helped him, for she had grand ideas. He was recklessly generous, but not over-ostentatious. He lived well, but never in great style; he never had a great house and many servants, as Garrick did. He was a Bohemian of the Bohemians, and much preferred a chop at an inn to a repast at a swagger restaurant. His habits of recklessness were probably a reaction from the enforced penury of his early days, for if there is one lesson that a hand-to-mouth existence does not teach, it is that of economy. A small, regular income, having to make a little go a long way, is more likely to do that. Kean drank very hard, and indulged himself in other ways. Drinking was a habit contracted in early youth. To be drunk was the normal condition of those amongst whom he was born. His licentiousness was probably no worse and his harem probably not so large as that of many quite respected actors of his own and a later day. He was like Dickens' Haunted Man. For ever haunted by his worser self. But "he was a man, take him for all in all"; we shall hope to look upon his like again.

In appearance he was small, dark, and foreign-looking. His figure had nothing to recommend it, his legs were badly shaped and still bore traces of the crippling accident of his early circus days. In short, his appearance was such that were he to present himself, even at this day, at a theatre and ask for work he would, very likely, be turned away without a trial. But he overcame all his physical drawbacks with wonderful skill, and even became famous for the graceful beauty of his movements. His head, to some extent, compensated for his figure. He was pale, with a shock of dark chestnut-brown, wavy hair, with a very wonderful pair of dark flashing eyes. Even at the last, when he is said to have changed beyond recognition, his eyes retained some of their wonder. An actor who played with him in "*Richard III*" said he could never forget the dying glance from those eyes.

He had a wonderfully rich, resonant voice; sometimes inclined to be a little raucous.

An apt description of Edmund Kean, one that sums up in three words his appearance, nature, and habits, is given in Sir Arthur Pinero's play "*Trelawney of the Wells*." "He was a great gypsy," says one of the characters speaking of Kean, and that is just exactly what he was.

Had Edmund Kean had proper opportunities and proper education, not so much perhaps in book learning as in discipline and self-control, he would probably have been the very greatest actor that ever trod the English stage. As it is, and as far as one can judge from the only kind of evidence that is possible, he must take second place to Garrick, who was, in every sense of the word, a master of his art. Although Kean probably soared, at times, to heights that Garrick



EDMUND KEAN AS "RICHARD III."

never reached, his performances were seldom, from all accounts, so completely convincing. Coleridge said that seeing him play was like reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning. It might have been said, watching Garrick play was like reading Shakespeare by the light of a search-light. At the same time, the individuality of the two great actors was very distinct, and Garrick might be described as a great portrayer of characters where Kean portrayed moods and passions. But Kean did not always quite reach the goal he hoped to, notably in "*Orestes*" and "*King Lear.*" He wanted all London to see what he could do over the dead body of *Cordelia*, but what he did do was not so appallingly convincing as what he had done a few seconds previously in the prayer. His *Hamlet*, although his own favourite character, was not by any means so with his audience. One can well imagine that he was too eager, too fiery and passionate for the philosophical *Hamlet*, the man who looked before every step, who cursed the fate that would make him be up and doing. But Kean was marvellously good in places, especially in and immediately before and after the play scene. But Kean evidently did not get Garrick's effect in Act iii, Sc. 4, in the heart-rending scene with his mother; nor was he any nearer it when playing it in Garrick's manner after tuition from Mrs. Garrick. He does not seem to have been able to portray feelings which he had not actually experienced. He had never known what it was to have a mother's love, or to care tenderly for a mother, and it seems that in the heart-breaking scene he spoke to her in harsh anger rather than in the terribly sad necessity which bids *Hamlet* speak and emphasize the truth. But surely there is little anger in his heart, and what there is dies away at the sight of his mother's terrible anguish and remorse. It is one of the greatest scenes the greatest portrayer of humanity has written, and the feelings aroused are surely not the superficial ones of anger and indignation.

Although Kean does not seem altogether to have understood this scene, one has only to read the notices of his performance, and indeed his own life, to realize how well he understood the scenes with *Ophelia*, better perhaps than any other actor, and how tenderly and tragically he played them. Equally true and tender and truly tragic were *Othello's* farewell and the "rose" speech to *Desdemona*.

Again, in the play of "*Bertram*," when he addressed his son with "God bless the child," his pathos, which, as has been said, was beyond the reach of art, was practised and rehearsed again and again at the bedside of his own sleeping child. But on the whole it was in the exposition of the fiercer elements in human nature that Kean excelled. His *Shylock*, as all the world knows, was a masterpiece. His raging in, and just previous to, the *Tubal* scene, woke up the English drama that had lulled back into the genteel doze of the pre-Garrick days. In *Richard III* and *Sir Giles Overreach* he surpassed himself, and terrified even his fellow-actors. Certain scenes in his *Macbeth* petrified the whole audience, seeing for the first time a living portrayal of abject, terror-struck, fear and remorse. The gentler, domestic, almost poetic, side of *Macbeth's* nature Kean does not seem to have brought out at all, and his delivery of the pitiably sad and moving lines at the end of the play left his audience cold, neither exciting their censure nor compassion.

"God

child"

les

Macbeth

This scene, the last scene of "*Lear*," and the Queen's chamber scene in "*Hamlet*," are surely the supreme depths of tragedy, and seem to have marked Kean's limitations, for he was not completely successful in any of them. Perhaps he might have been, eventually, had he given himself a better chance. He was one of those artists who held very strongly that the actor should feel every emotion at the time he portrays it; whether that is so or not, he must surely *be capable* of feeling it.

Had Kean lived a life other than he did, he might have learnt some of those secrets and portrayed them. In spite of his assertions to the contrary, he once proved his detachedness from the scene he was playing when, after an affecting, convincing, and magnificent piece of acting, he whispered to his son, "We are doing the trick, Charlie."

In any case, he believed in hard work and plenty of it. He was a tremendous worker, and when studying a part would tramp for miles into the country learning, rehearsing, reciting, and studying it from every standpoint. This he started at a very early age, and, as we have already said, obviously had no belief in trusting to the inspiration of the moment, and in this respect was a much better worker and actor than he pretended to be.

As already pointed out, he had not many physical advantages beyond a fine eye and voice. He was an exquisite ballad singer and an accomplished dancer and fencer, to say nothing of being able to mimic anybody, turn back-somersaults and handsprings, come up through traps, and do everything required of the best harlequin in the West of England, as he was at one time described.

As things are, and with the possible exception of Garrick, Kean is undoubtedly the greatest actor that ever trod the English boards. Had he had more self-control and not been such a slave to that deadly enemy the artistic temperament, there would have been no exceptions, and he might have gone on giving England his matchless, and more than matchless, performances for another twenty years or more.

As a letter-writer and speech-maker he was prolific and pompous. He was fond of the pose of learning, encouraged the tradition that he had been educated at Eton, and loved to interlard his letters and speeches with ridiculous and generally inappropriate and pointless Latin quotations. As master of the Drury Lane Fund he had many occasions to make speeches, but no one was ever very much the better for them. That he could, on occasion, be apt in letter-writing, he showed by his laconic letter to Mrs. Garrick anent *Abel Drugger*, and his cryptic screed after the "Deptford Tragedy." His letters generally breathe fierce pride, but he could be abject on occasion, as his letter to his New York audience proved. The love-letters brought to light in Cox *v.* Kean were fiery, fluent and filthy.

Next to himself and his art the thing he loved best in the world was music. No one who ever heard him ever forgot his gentle, sweet rendering of Moore's Irish melodies and old English ballads. He always said he deeply regretted never having had the spare time to devote himself to music. It is a pity he did not devote half of what he did have to it.

All things considered, the world was very much the richer for his presence. Tradition, the poor player's only immortalizer, has erected a mighty monument to him. So long as the drama—the most vivid of all arts—and its traditions continue to interest and attract, so long will its students be enthralled by the brilliant meteoric appearance across its firmament of Edmund Kean.

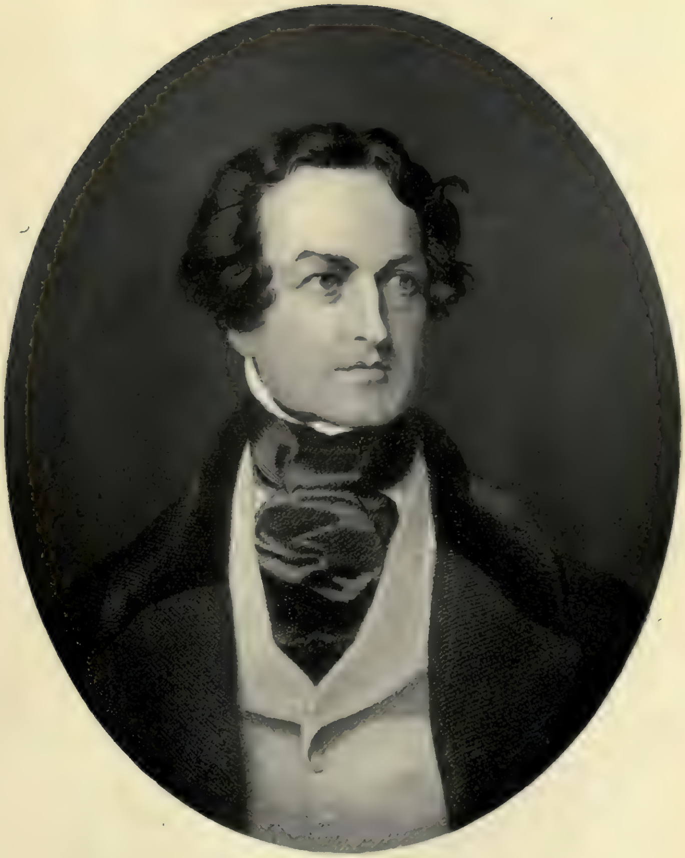
WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY

1793–1873

ACCORDING to his own account William Charles Macready was born in Mary Street (now part of Stanhope Street), Euston Road, London, on Sunday, 3rd March, 1793. According to the register of St. Pancras Parish Church, 21st January, 1796, he was born in 1792. The register probably knew more about it at that time than he did. But the great fact, as he would have been, probably was, the first to admit, is that he *was* born! His father, the son of a Dublin upholsterer, was an actor who had played with Macklin. His mother was an actress, a Miss Christina Birch, an East Anglian from Lincolnshire.

At the time of Macready's birth his father was appearing at Covent Garden. Macready was the fifth child of his parents, three of whom died before he was born. The fourth, Olivia, who was a year and a half older than Macready, only lived long enough to leave an indelible impression on his memory of an "angelic influence." She died when Macready was barely five years old.

Macready was early sent to a preparatory school in Kensington, where he had to wear a uniform of scarlet jacket and blue nankeen trousers. From Kensington he was removed to a school in St. Paul's Square, Birmingham, kept by a violent-tempered, severe



WILLIAM CHARLES MACREADY.

pedagogue called Edgell. The prefix "Revd." with which he was credited seems to have been adopted, as "Mrs." sometimes is, more because it was expected than because he was officially entitled to it.

Being a schoolmaster he just ought to have been a reverend. But he ought never to have been a schoolmaster, and was utterly unsuited to that position. Macready shone especially at mathematics, recitation, and reading. But his "*h's*" were very troublesome, and were always being mislaid. (In after life he was always desperately afraid of mislaying his gentility!) To cure him of this inveterate habit and insuperable obstacle to progress, Macready's mother took infinite pains, and would especially make him repeat Dryden's *Alexander's Heart*, containing the line, as Macready pronounced it, "*'Appy, 'appy, 'appy Pair.*"

At school he was a member of a group of conspirators determined to resist the authority of Mr. Edgell. During the absence of Macready from school, owing to an attack of mumps, his accomplices were detected, punished, and repentant. So that on his return he found himself the only conspirator. The despot made a speech which concluded with the boast that he would make every boy obey him. "I'll be hanged if I'll obey you," says Macready, well out of earshot of the pedagogue, but unfortunately not of a pardoned rebel, who instantly "sneaked." Whilst Mr. Edgell went to get the birch Macready made a bolt for it, but was soon captured and brought back to receive quite merciless punishment.

During his holidays the boy's favourite amusement was seeing plays at the Birmingham theatre, of which his father was now manager.

On one occasion he saw King, in his dressing-room at the theatre, dressed as *Lord Ogleby*. On another, he saw the great Lord Nelson, who, during the short Peace of Amiens, was making a triumphal progress throughout the country, a proceeding severely commented on by the House of Lords. Macready describes, in his reminiscences, how his father received the great Admiral and conducted him to his box, walking before him with lighted candles. Macready says that the "extremely melancholy expression of Nelson's countenance, and the mild and gentle tones of his voice," impressed him "most sensibly." For many years afterwards young Macready was called upon to relate what Lord Nelson had said to his father.

Nelson bowed sadly and mournfully to the frantic applause of the audience at a horribly jingoistic song, but Lady Hamilton laughed and clapped her hands as loud as she could, which must have been pretty loud, and kicked against the footboard of the seat with her heels!

At the close of the term during which the rebellion incident took place, Macready, at his own importunity, was removed from Mr. Edgell's, and his mother took the opportunity to give that gentleman a piece of her mind. He then went to Bolton, where his father's company were playing at the small theatre. From there he went to Dublin for a holiday and a visit to his relations. He was very much pleased with Dublin!

On his return he stayed with his parents at Birmingham and Leamington, and then set off for Rugby, in company with his father. He entered the school, 3rd March, 1803, going to the house kept by William Birch, his mother's cousin. Mr. Birch was very kind to him indeed, and did much to help him over the most difficult period of school life, doubly difficult to a boy of Macready's temperament. The boy's great consolation was a large bedroom which he shared with his cousin, who, however, was seldom there in the daytime, but Macready having no cupboard in the hall was allowed to keep his books there, and he had a small private library consisting of Plutarch's *Lives*, Tooke's *Pantheon*, Pope's *Homer*, the *History of Ireland*, and Mentor's *Letters to Youth*, a parting gift from his mother, which he pored over in his quiet retreat. He was a very studious boy and made rapid progress with his studies. His father's profession, contrary to what might be expected, made him extremely popular.

Rugby at that time had a distinct theatrical leaning and continually got up theatricals, for which Macready's father would lend properties and costumes. Macready himself early acquired a reputation as an actor and reciter. His greatest part in those days was *Zanga* in "*The Revenge*." On a marked programme of the Rugby Speech Day of 1808, his rendering of the Closet Scene from "*Hamlet*" is marked "Surprisingly well indeed." He was supported by one Skeeles as the *Queen*, about whom the commentator is silent. His first home-coming from Rugby was a dreadfully sad one. A message sent to a friend at Leicester to detain him there miscarried, and poor young Macready arrived home to find that his mother had died the day before. He had been counting the moments till he would see her again. The blow was a terrible one, even at that early age, for she was a gentle, sweet woman and her son was devoted to her. Her virtues were well known and her death did not pass unnoticed in the papers. Most of them published sympathetic obituary notices, and one a long anonymous epitaph.

On his return to Rugby Macready continued to make very good progress. One half-holiday he and his cousin Tom Birch were smuggled into a carriage and driven over to Leicester to see Master Betty play in "*Richard III.*"

John Philip Kemble and Harris, of Covent Garden, sat in a stage-box behind them, and Macready was overpowered by the scent on Kemble's handkerchief.

During this "half" Macready was one day called aside from his games in the close by Dr. Inglis, the head master, when the following conversation took place, apropos of his future.

"Have you not thought of your father's profession?"

"No, sir!"

"Should you not like it?"

"No, sir. I should wish to go to the Bar."

"Are you quite certain you should not wish to go on the stage?"

"Quite certain, sir; I very much dislike it, and the thought of it."

"Well," he added, "I am glad of it. But if you had had any thoughts that way I should have wished to give you some advice, which I am glad to believe is now unnecessary."

That is Macready's transcript of the conversation. We will hope, for the sake of Dr. Inglis's grammar, it is not correct. In 1807, Dr. Inglis was succeeded by Dr. Wool, who selected Macready to do the Closet Scene from "*Hamlet*" on the Speech Day already referred to.

In the year 1808, Macready, unbeknown to himself at the moment, left Rugby for the last time. He and his brother went to spend their Christmas holidays at Manchester, where their father was now living, having left the Birmingham theatre and taken over the management of that at Manchester, an ill-starred adventure, as events proved. On arriving at Birmingham, on their way through to Manchester, the two brothers found a box-ticket for the theatre awaiting them, a courteous attention from the new manager.

This was 16th December, 1808. The programme consisted of "*The Busy-Body*," followed by the pantomime of "*Alonzo and Imogene.*" Whilst animadverting upon the production in general and players in particular, Macready, in his reminiscences, speaks of a "little mean-looking man in a shabby green satin dress, who appeared as *Alonzo the Brave.*" He apparently made no impression whatsoever at the time on Macready, whose amazement may be imagined when, a few years later, he was able to identify him with Edmund Kean!

Macready had not been home long before he became aware of how matters stood, and of his father's financial distress. He at once made up his mind to forego his own inclinations and do what he could to help matters. He gave up all idea of the Bar, and announced his intention of going on the stage and becoming his father's right-hand man. That worthy at first demurred, more from pride than anything else, but Macready was firm, and at once set about preparing himself for his new career, which he faced with more determination than enthusiasm. He, of course, left Rugby, and his brother was also withdrawn and sent to a day-school in Manchester. His cousin William Birch, the housemaster, undertook the responsibility of the debt of £100 owing for tuition fees, etc., at Birmingham. Thus we have Macready, at the age of sixteen, launched without any real enthusiasm or love of his art on a profession which requires, or certainly required at that time, a very large amount of both if life were to be at all bearable.

He did not immediately play parts, but lent a hand generally to his father in managing the theatre and dodging the Sheriff's officers. This sort of thing went on for about six months, after which he went to Newcastle, where he was practically business manager for the summer season, and fell desperately in love with an actress called Phyllis. He then returned to Birmingham, where his father was given a benefit, which proved a bumper, and placed old Macready temporarily in funds. Father and son then left Birmingham for Leicester, where they parted, Macready going to London to stay with his father's friend Mr. Fawcett, learn fencing under Angelo, and generally study the leading actors of the metropolis. But he was under direct commands not to go and see John Kemble, lest he should become an imitator. The warning was unnecessary, for the O.P. riots were in full swing, and Macready could neither see nor hear John Kemble. But he saw Cooke, Young, C. Kemble, Munden, Liston, and others for the first three acts. After that, at half-time, the O.P. rioters rushed in, and for the rest of the evening pandemonium reigned. He saw Elliston play *Macbeth* as a pantomime at the Surrey Theatre, and made the acquaintance of Theodore Hook and Tom Sheridan, whom he met in the park and described as being handsome, but sickly-looking, with a good-humoured manner.

After this visit he returned to Manchester via Leicester, where he rejoined his father (who had now thrown up the sponge) and accompanied him to the Sheriff's officer. When Macready saw his father really a prisoner he burst into tears, and was told by his parent if he could not command himself to go away. The father went to durance vile in Lancaster Castle, and the son to durance still more vile in charge of the company at Chester. His troubles began in real earnest. The company, all total strangers to him, were in a state of revolt, most of their salaries being in arrear. The play was produced in a slovenly manner more likely to repel than attract. Macready woke things up as well as he could by instituting more and better rehearsals, putting up a piece on the subject of the late jubilee, and receiving " bespeaks " from Lord Grosvenor and other persons of influence and property in the neighbourhood.

Things were just beginning to look up a little when the proprietors put in an execution for the remainder of rent due, and Macready was forced to borrow money from his friends. He finally succeeded in paying off the debt, the rent, and the salaries that were in arrear, and then closed the theatre and set off with three of his company in a post-chaise to Newcastle, of which town he had great hopes, for a selection of the best performers from Chester and Leicester constituted a very good provincial company. They had an eventful journey, and were hung up at Brough, on the borders of Westmoreland, on Christmas Day, by the refusal of a landlord to cash a £5 note he did not like the look of, and also to send them forward in the then state of the roads with less than four horses. Macready was in a bad dilemma. All his hopes depended on his reaching Newcastle in good time on the morrow. Finally the landlord was prevailed upon to change the £5 note and advance £3 upon the watches of the party. Macready and his three companions drove away behind the four horses, giving three hearty cheers as they left the dreary little town behind.

At Durham they found their funds just equal to paying for the chaise, but being well known there, had no difficulty in getting credit for their board and lodging. They arrived at Newcastle early next morning, and Macready obtained further funds from the treasurer of the theatre.

The Newcastle season, with Conway as its "star," was quite a success, and before the close of it Macready was able to get his father's discharge from bankruptcy and prison.

The season was not without incident. On one occasion Macready was threatened with a challenge for having a drunk and boisterous young man removed from the boxes. At another time Conway, as *Macbeth*, rushed off the stage to wash the bloodstains from his hands after the murder of Duncan, to find no dresser waiting with the necessary soap and towel. There was no time for reflection. Macready, who was standing by, dragged *Macbeth* to the nearest dressing-room, where he plunged his hands into a jug of cold water. "A towel, quick!" Macready snatched up something that looked like one. *Macbeth* wiped his hands on it, and rushed back on the stage. Then came *Lady Macbeth* in a similar dilemma, and the same process was repeated. The next morning when Macready arrived at the theatre he was met by his acting-manager, with a face as long as a fiddle, and the information that there was a thief in the theatre. Mr. Simkins' breeches had been stolen! When he went to dress himself after the show they were gone, and he was obliged to walk home through the snow without any! A thought struck Macready, and there, sure enough, thrown under the table in his room, were Simkins' breeches, plentifully steeped in the gore of Duncan, King of Scotland !

On Mr. Macready senior's return, his son's responsibilities were lessened, and his duties consisted chiefly in attending rehearsals and training understudies, crowds, etc. Old Macready was very chary of praising his son, but was once surprised out of his reticence. Macready was showing an actor how, in impersonating a savage about to spring upon his enemy, to change suddenly from savagery to astonishment on seeing himself reflected in that enemy's shield. Said old Macready, "If you can do anything like that on the stage, there will be few come near you."

The time was now coming for young Macready to make his debut as an actor. The Newcastle season came to a close, and Macready, father and son, together with their company, and not without some difficulty as to ways and means, set off for Birmingham to open the theatre there, of which the father had become lessee.

William Charles' first appearance was made ~~7th June, 1810, in the Birmingham Theatre~~. "The part of *Romeo*," so ran the bills, "by a Young Gentleman, being his first appearance on any stage." *Juliet* was played by Mrs. Young.

By dint of very careful rehearsing Macready had so trained himself in the part that he was able mechanically to keep going until he had got over the first few trying moments when, to use his own words, "there was a mist before his eyes, and he felt like an automaton moving in certain defined limits." But the plaudits of the audience brought him to his senses, and he gradually warmed to his work, and according to his own and other accounts gave an excellent performance. On being asked how he felt at the close, he replied that he felt as if he would like to act it all over again.

His father, who was a great believer in advertisement, afterwards sent him up to London to have his portrait, as *Romeo*, painted by De Wilde, an artist who had perpetrated many a poor player's poor portrait. The portrait of Macready as *Romeo* is as rare as it is ridiculous. It represents a chubby youth dressed in a pink and white garb, which includes a broad sash up to the arm-pits, a large upstanding ruff, white kid gloves, white silk stockings, white plumes in a large black hat, and dancing pumps. This wonderful costume was designed for him by his father.

He was now fairly started on his career as an actor, and soon played in quick succession *Lothair* in "Monk" Lewis's "*Adelgitha*," *Young Norval* in "*Douglas*," *Zanga* in "*Revenge*," in which he did not repeat the success of his schooldays, and *George Barnewell*, the part of a guilty, self-conscious, bashful youth, in which Macready says he was quite at home. It was after this performance that he went to London to sit for his portrait to De Wilde, as mentioned above, then returned to Newcastle, where he added three new characters to his répertoire, *Achmet* in "*Barbarossa*," *Earl Osmond* in "*The Castle Spectre*," and *Rollo* in "*Pizarro*."

He then had a few weeks "out," which were passed at Tynemouth, then a small fishing village, where he worked very hard at studying his books and his parts; he then proceeded to Leicester and Birmingham. At the latter city he added *Albyn* in "*The Countess of Salisbury*" and *Luke* in "*Riches*" to his repertory.

Albyn Macready considered a silly part in a silly play, and *Luke* an unnatural part in an unnatural one. Whether this is so or not, the latter was a fine acting part that had tried the capabilities of old and experienced actors, and the youthful Macready had his work cut out to play it. But he was on the verge of a more ambitious effort still, for the following Christmas he appeared at Newcastle as *Hamlet* for the first time, and for his benefit. In his reminiscences he tells us that if he did not play the part the part played him, and records the opinion, now shared by many, that complete failure in the character is a very rare occurrence. So, also, it may be added, is complete success. *Hamlet* was followed by more new characters, amongst which were *Posthumus Leonatus* in "*Cymbeline*" and *Orestes* in Philip's translation of Racine's "*Andromache*." In May followed another season in Birmingham, with more new characters, after which he again went to London to be again immortalized by De Wilde, this time as *Hamlet*. Then followed another season at Leicester and then Newcastle again, where Macready had to face a formidable ordeal. Mrs. Siddons stopped to play a couple of nights on her way through from Edinburgh. Macready was cast for her chief support in "*The Gamester*" and "*Douglas*"; in the former, *Beverley* to her *Mrs. Beverley*, in the latter as *Norval* to her *Lady Randolph*. Of *Norval* Macready was fairly confident, knowing the part backwards, but as *Beverley* he was fearfully frightened and had a bad attack of stage fright, but Mrs. Siddons came to the rescue and whispered his lines to him. As the play progressed Macready warmed to his work, and Mrs. Siddons waiting for a cue in the wings called out, "Bravo, sir, bravo!" and applauded him loudly in full view of one section of the audience, who endorsed her approval. Before her departure she sent for him and gave him a few parting words of advice. "You are in the right way," said she, "but remember what I say. Study, study, study, and do not marry until you are thirty." Macready took the advice to the last letter. He was immensely struck by her acting, and always spoke of it as a revelation, which ever afterwards had its influence upon him in the study of his art.

From Newcastle he returned again to Birmingham, playing some new and old parts during his father's last season of management in that town. At the close of the season he went to Leicester, where he had to support another great actress, Mrs. Jordan. Macready, between Comedy and Tragedy, Melpomene and Thalia, Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Jordan, was surely a subject for a painter, and opportunity for advertisement, which old Macready should not have missed.

De Wilde might have rivalled Sir Joshua! Macready was delighted with Mrs. Jordan's performance and the care with which she prepared it. And she marked her approval of his by exclaiming, "Very well indeed, sir!" after his rehearsal of the love-scene. He played *Don Felix* to her *Violante* in "*The Wonder.*"

If by no means a startling, original genius, Macready was certainly becoming an uncommonly good actor, whom the heads of the profession were delighted to play with.

Soon after this he is back in Newcastle again, superintending the production of a revival of "*Richard II*," under the fond and false impression that it was the first since Shakespeare's time. Then followed some more new characters, including *Richard III* and *Mark*

Antony in "*Antony and Cleopatra.*" *Richard* afterwards became one of Macready's most popular performances, some critics considering it compared favourably with and even surpassed Edmund Kean's. But he never cared for himself in the part, and thought a tall hump-backed man not in nature.

As *Mark Antony* he appeared for his benefit, and the occasion was marked by the kind of occurrence more frequent in the earlier lampooning days. In the morning a sheet of paper appeared stuck outside the box-office, setting forth that Macready had shamefully misused and even kicked a Miss Sullivan, the actress who was to play *Cleopatra.* As soon as he saw the libel Macready carefully kept out of the girl's way until the actual performance began, when the audience were treated to the absurd picture of *Antony* leading *Cleopatra* down to the footlights and indulging in the following dialogue :—

(*To Cleopatra*)

Antony: Have I ever been guilty of injustice of any kind to you, since you have been in the theatre?

Cleopatra: No, sir.

Antony: Have I ever behaved to you in an ungentlemanlike manner?

Cleopatra: No, sir!

Antony: It is unnecessary to ask, but to satisfy the writer of the anonymous libel, have I ever kicked you?

Cleopatra: Oh, no, sir!

(*They retire up stage.*)

Cleopatra: If it be love indeed, tell me how much.

(*Etc., etc., etc.*)*!!*

Moreover, as Macready states in his reminiscences, his attentions at this time were being addressed to some other member of the green-room!

From Newcastle Macready went to Glasgow, where his father now ran the theatre in conjunction with that at Dumfries. He made his first appearance as *Hamlet* and was delighted with his audience, who returned the compliment and were as encouragingly critical as a Scotch audience knows how to be. In the course of this season, with which even he himself was satisfied, he added many new parts to his répertoire, including *Captain Plume* in the "*Recruiting Officer*," *Puff* in "*The Critic*" (he must have been a puffy *Puff*), *Young Marlow*, and *Mark Antony* in "*Julius Cæsar*." He had good opportunities of testing the powers of his remarkable memory by playing some very long parts at very short notice. Then he played a little season at Dumfries, where actors were not in very good repute, possibly because of certain recollections of Edmund Kean in his strolling days. Returning to Glasgow his father, at his suggestion, brought off a very successful *coup* by engaging Master, now Mr., Betty; Betty had grown a big, fat, very handsome man, and, according to Macready, an excellent actor. But he was suffering from the backward swing of the pendulum, and audiences now belittled his powers nearly as much as they had belauded them before. They played together Dimond's "*Royal Oak*," Betty—*King Charles;* Macready—*William Wyndham*, and Franklin's "*Earl of Warwick*," Betty—*The Earl*, and Macready—*King Edward IV*. Father or son, or both, lost their heads somewhat over this success and had a furious quarrel, with the result that the father left for Newcastle and the son remained at Glasgow another week. Macready then repaired to

Newcastle, where he no longer lived with his father, but in separate lodgings, on a salary of £3 a week.

The success of the Betty engagement at Glasgow led to its repetition at Newcastle, and Macready again bears testimony to the excellence of Betty's acting. But, it appears, he did not study improvement and new characters, and allowed himself to rust.

During this season Macready produced successfully "*King John*," though he did not play in it himself.

It is surprising to realize that Macready, now quite a recognized star in his own little northern world, was not yet twenty-one. In 1814 he came of age, just about the time that Edmund Kean came into his own in London. Macready, hearing of his great success, and well remembering his insignificant performance as *Alonzo the Brave*, was amazed. He continued to work for, and quarrel with, his father, playing many characters, now starring and now playing "seconds" to Charles Mayne Young and Charles Kemble. Young gave him some useful hints on over-acting which he was not at first inclined to accept, thinking that Young wished to inculcate his own frigid style, but later he appreciated the value of them. Charles Kemble, Macready afterwards aptly described as "a first-rate actor in second-rate parts," like his late illustrious kinsman Harry Kemble. Macready furthermore tried his hand at adapting, and adapted Scott's "*Marmion*" for his own benefit and "*Rokeby*" for his father's.

On 16th December, 1814, an exciting event happened, inaccurate versions of which haunted Macready for the rest of his life. He and his father were sitting over their wine in their lodgings in Pilgrim Street, feeling very cosy and safe from the inclement hurricane howling outside. Macready's eldest sister, whom he had just escorted home from a boarding-school, had gone upstairs to bed with a headache, when there came a tremendous crash; the whole house seemed tumbling to ruin, and the room was filled with dust and smoke. Macready tore up to his sister's room and carried her downstairs into the hall, where the inmates of the house were found assembled in various stages of *déshabille* and terror. Suddenly the landlady screamed "My bairns! My bairns!" and rushed to the top of the house followed by Macready. In the room above that in which he and his father had been sitting they found the two children, calmly playing beneath an old flap mahogany table, whilst around them lay the debris of bricks, mortar, and slates caused by a falling chimney having broken through the roof.

Henceforward Macready was dogged through life by the pathetic, noble, and beautiful story of the child rescued from the burning cottage!

Soon after this he had such a serious quarrel with his father that he accepted a standing offer made some years previously with Dimond, the manager of the Bath theatre. As Bath was regarded as a stepping-stone to London he was naturally eager to appear there, but before doing so played another week with his father at Newcastle, adding the *Stranger* and *Othello* to his répertoire. At Bath he was very excited at seeing his name in large letters on the play-bills advertising him to appear 20th December, 1814, as *Romeo*. The nervous emotion at seeing his name on a play-bill never left him, and afterwards became so unpleasant that he would often cross over to the other side of a street to avoid it.

At Bath he was a great success, so much so that an offer to play in Dublin for seven weeks at £50 a week was made and accepted. In the meantime negotiations were also going on with regard to an engagement at Covent Garden, but they were, for the time being, spoilt by the blundering officiousness of Macready senior. Whilst they were in progress our actor went up to London for a few days, and took the opportunity to see Edmund Kean as *Richard III* and Miss O'Neill as *Juliet*. With both he was delighted, and describes Kean's performance as far superior to G. F. Cooke, hitherto considered unapproachable in that character. Macready senior, who accompanied him to the performance, did not agree, and whispered, "It's very poor!" "Oh, no," said his son, "this is no common thing." After the performance Kean supped at the hotel with the Macreadys, father and son, and the son was deeply impressed with the great tragedian's modest and unassuming manner. At first he was very reserved and silent, but as the wine circulated more freely his tongue was loosened, and he delighted his hosts with his anecdotes, humorous mimicry, and exquisite and touchingly sweet singing.

Macready described it as "a memorable evening, the first and last I ever spent in private with this extraordinary man." A few nights after he saw Miss O'Neill as *Juliet*.

"Through my whole experience," said he, "hers was the only representation of *Juliet* I have seen. . . . She is alone the Arabian bird."

After this pleasant little break Macready went to play at Glasgow, via Bristol and Newcastle! In spite of the fact that he had Kean against him, drawing the enormous salary of £100 pounds a night, he did very well for himself, even better than he knew at the time, for on this visit he first met his future wife, then a little girl of nine, playing in a farce, "*The Hunter of the Alps.*"

She was very imperfect in her part, having been sent on to play it at very short notice, and was soundly rated by her future husband, probably not for the last time! From Glasgow Macready repaired to Dublin, fulfilling a thirteen weeks' engagement at £20 a week. There he added materially to his laurels and personal friends. He then toured a short while in the English provinces; then came the offer of an engagement at Drury Lane, which fell through on the question of terms. Discussing the matter with Lord Byron, then the most influential member of the Drury Lane committee, Macready's intermediary, a person called Noel, after expatiating on his client's artistic merits, added, "And besides all this, Mr. Macready is a very moral man."

"Ha!" said Byron, "I suppose he asks five pounds a week more for that!"

Covent Garden were more lavish and offered him what he liked, so long as it was not too exorbitant, for one, two, or three years, or for life! Moreover, Young at Covent Garden was less likely to stand in his way than Kean of Drury Lane. So after some correspondence and another starring tour in Ireland, during which he saw John Kemble give his farewell performance of *Othello* to an empty house in Dublin, Macready closed with Covent Garden and made his first appearance there as *Orestes* in "*The Distressed Mother,*" 16th September, 1816. He was very successful and ~~earned loud~~ applause, especially from Edmund Kean, who was conspicuous in the audience. The Press, whilst generally commenting on his ugliness, received him very favourably, Hazlitt going so far as to say that he was by far the best tragic actor who had come out in his remembrance, with the exception of Kean. Not long after, Macready was sitting in front one night when he heard a playgoer remark to his companion, apropos of the new actor: "I'm told he is a capital actor, but a devilish ugly fellow. They say he's an ugly likeness of Liston!" A thing one would have thought impossible!

Orestes was followed by Jephson's "*Julia*," one of John Kemble and Mrs. Siddons' greatest successes. Macready played the villain *Mentevole* to such purpose, that he was henceforward, much to his disgust, invariably cast for villains' parts, soon playing the most diabolical of them all. Harris, the manager of Covent Garden, announced him to alternate the parts of *Othello* and *Iago* with Young. Macready was furious. *Iago* he had never played at all, and *Othello* very seldom, and he was given very little time to get them up in. But it had to be done, and he did it, considering all things, with great credit to himself. *Othello* was played 10th October, 1816, and *Iago* on the 15th. *Othello* was a real success, and *Iago* pleased the public more than it did Macready himself. Hazlitt described Young's *Othello* as a great humming-top, and Macready's *Iago* as a boy whipping it—not a bad description of the two parts, either. Macready's *Othello* he described as whimpering and lachrymose.

The performances did not draw, and Macready only repeated *Othello* once and *Iago* never again.

Circumstances now conspired to keep him, for the time being, out of the great classical parts. Junius Brutus Booth of the Brighton and Worthing theatres was engaged, and from his likeness to Kean threatened a furore. But Kean, as we have seen, soon took very effective steps to show that the likeness was only skin deep. John Philip Kemble's farewell series of performances was also announced. His "seconds" were played by his brother Charles and Young, and Macready had often to content himself with sitting in front and watching the performances, by which he was not particularly edified. However, he got some very fine parts in second-rate plays, and accepted them with a bad grace that earned him the sobriquet of the Cock-Grumbler. Once, when grousing at his fate in the wings, a fellow-actor asked him, if he disliked the parts so much, why the devil did he play them so well? Amongst them was *Gambia* in Morton's "*The Slave*," *Valentio* in Dimond's "*Conquest of Taranto*," a part in which he, as the villain, completely outshone Booth as the hero, chiefly by his wonderful ability to convey his thoughts without speech and with a somewhat inexpressive face. As *Pescara*, in Richard Lalor Sheil's "*Apostate*," he still further advanced his reputation. Ludwig Tieck said that this performance took him back to the best days of German acting, which may or may not have been a compliment, for Tieck professed to see no merit in Kean, whose acting one can certainly believe had no resemblance to anything German. At the close of this season Macready toured with his father's company in the north, spent another pleasant little holiday with his sisters on his beloved Holy Isle, and returned to London, where he took part in the dinner to Talma. On that occasion John Philip Kemble singled the young actor out for honour by desiring to drink wine with him. Charles Kemble duly impressed upon Macready the full significance of this condescension, and Macready was suitably overcome.

After this he again went for a little tour in the north on his father's circuit, father and son continually quarrelling. On his return to London he was again cast for melodramatic villains, and continued to play the part of the demon of discontent on and off the stage.

Indeed, he was now getting so thoroughly discontented with his profession that he had serious thoughts of exchanging it for the Church, which, as he remarks in his reminiscences, offered good facilities for his talents! But, fortunately for the stage, and possibly also for the Church, the design was nipped in the bud, the funds necessary for his ecclesiastical education having to be diverted to assisting his brother, to whom he was devoted, in his profession as a soldier. Moreover, Macready's hopes of one day shining on the topmost rungs of his profession were improved by a very successful appearance as *Romeo*, during the absence through illness of Charles Kemble, to the *Juliet* of Miss O'Neill. He must certainly have played the part extremely well to have successfully overcome his personal defects.

Romeo was before very long followed by another great success, a villain in a sense, but a romantic, popular one, the outlaw *Rob Roy* in Pocock's adaptation of Scott's novel, then recently published. In his somewhat ponderous way Macready really seems to have played this part extraordinarily well, and it was the means of introducing him into those literary circles which henceforward meant so much to him. The muses of minor poets were awakened by his performance of the romantic brigand. Barry Cornwall and Charles Lloyd both wrote sonnets to him, as did Tennyson in later years.

Through Charles Lloyd, Macready made the acquaintance of Lamb and Talfourd. Further successes, as *Glenalvon* in "*Douglas*" and *Posthumus* in "*Cymbeline*," followed, and at the close of the season he took a more hopeful outlook on things generally, but it does not seem to have been in his nature ever to make the best of them. Not long after this he appeared successfully in another adaptation from Scott, as *George Robertson* in "*The Heart of Midlothian*," afterwards visiting on a professional tour the scene of the novel, Edinburgh, where he was not very well received. Nor was he able to make use of an introduction to Scott, the Waverley wizard being at that time too ill to see any one.

From Edinburgh he went to Glasgow, where he was more favourably received. At the close of his engagement he went for a walking tour in the Highlands, returning to Covent Garden to make quite a failure in the part of *Joseph Surface*. To do him justice he had not sufficient time in which to study it. After this came *Rolla* in "*Pizarro*," *Mordent* in S. Beazley's "*Stewart*," and "*Henry V*," which was only a qualified success. But he was on the verge of one of the greatest successes of his life. For some time past the management of the theatre, as well as its patrons, had made repeated efforts to induce Macready to play *Richard III*, but feeling himself physically unsuited to it, and perhaps fearing comparison with Kean, he had always steadfastly refused.

The matter, however, was taken out of his hands, for one morning, whilst on his way to see his manager, he perceived bills stuck outside Covent Garden announcing his appearance in the character for the following Monday. Nothing was to be done now but to go home and study the part, which he did with all his accustomed care and industry.

The result was an unqualified success and a scene at the theatre that recalled Kean's first great triumph. The pit rose at Macready, hats and handkerchiefs were waved in the air, and he was forced to introduce to Covent Garden the custom hitherto confined to Drury Lane, and known as raising the dead, of coming before the curtain and announcing the programme for the following week. The critics were all unanimous in their praise of the performance, comparing it very favourably with Kean's, when they did venture to touch on the dangerous ground of comparison. Macready seems to have had a different conception of the character to Kean, not apparently so deep and dark. Possibly both were right, for *Richard III* is a many-sided character, and Leigh Hunt very cleverly summed up the two performances by saying that if their separate virtues could only be portrayed by the one person, the result would be a perfect *Richard.*

Macready called this performance the turning-point of his life. Settling-point would have been a better term. His position was now assured, and Kean alone could be considered his superior. The best parts were now open to him. *Richard III* was shortly followed by *Coriolanus*, in which he was hailed as actors usually were in that character, as "the noblest Roman of them all"! Critics were always glad of the opportunity of making the quotation! He then, to his great credit, refused the part of *Lear* in a production intended to forestall that of Kean at Drury Lane, but accepted *Edmund.* *Lear* was played by Booth. The production met with as little success as it deserved, but was soon followed by a great success, owing entirely to

Macready, and not only to his acting, but also to his judgment and perception in discovering the play. This was Sheridan Knowles' "*Virginius*," which had been sent to Macready for his opinion by a Glasgow friend. He was delighted with it, and easily prevailed upon the Covent Garden management to produce it. It first saw the light on 17th May, 1820, and thenceforward continued to be one of the most popular parts and plays in Macready's repertory. As *Virginius* he never had a rival. Even Edmund Kean, who afterwards essayed the part, failed to dethrone him.

This had been a wonderfully successful season for Macready. At the close of it he went on another tour to Ireland and Scotland. At Aberdeen the *Virginia* to his *Virginius* was little Miss Atkins, the young lady whom he had scolded some years before for not being word perfect. She was just blossoming into maidenhood, and Macready found in her an ideal representative of *Virginia*, and took what he was under the impression was a most paternal interest in her future. To use his own expression, he "grew less and less desirous of avoiding her," and at the close of the little season he sent for her to his room and presented her with the best Paisley shawl that Perth could provide! He then went to Liverpool, where he had to play to a *Virginia* old enough to be his mother.

On his return to Covent Garden he appeared in more new characters, including *Wallace* in Walker's play of that name. C. E. Walker was at that time little more than a schoolboy, and Macready who first read the play considered it little better than the work of one, and by sheer jobbery induced Covent Garden to produce it, where it met with a very fair measure of success, so the jobbery was justified. Macready also appeared as *Prospero* and *Iachimo*, and as the *King* in "*Henry IV*, *Part II*," in which character he was painted by Jackson in a well-known portrait now in the National Portrait Gallery. On 21st May, 1821, a partially restored "*Richard III*" was revived in place of the Cibberian version that had hitherto held the stage. Macready restored the Council Scene, but had not the courage (has anybody ever had it?) to abolish the doubtful lines, "Off with his head! So much for Buckingham!" or "Richard's himself again!"

In 1821 his contract at Covent Garden came to an end, but he renewed it for five years at £20 a week, with the oral proviso, afterwards the cause of much trouble, that in the event of any actor receiving a larger salary, his was to be made up to equal it. He was always to receive the maximum. The new season did not start very auspiciously. Charles Kemble had come into his share of the proprietorship, made over to him by his brother John Philip, and was giving great trouble. But "*Julius Cæsar*" was very successfully produced, Young playing *Brutus*, Charles Kemble *Mark Antony*, and Macready *Cassius*, of which he gave a very careful and excellent study. It afterwards became one of his most popular parts.

In 1822 he took a long holiday and went for a continental tour, visiting Paris, where he saw and was conquered by Mademoiselle Mars. From Paris he went to Geneva, wonderfully impressed with his journey over the Jura. At Lausanne he called on John Philip Kemble, but found him out. He then went across the Simplon into Italy, visiting Milan, Verona, where he experienced very proper sensations at the tomb of Juliet, and did the same at that of Petrarch at

Arqua. He then went to Venice, employing his mornings in learning the language, his afternoons in seeing the sights, neglecting, to use his own words, "nothing that untiring industry enabled him to see, the luxurious cushions of his gondola affording him repose and amusement in his transit from place to place." At the theatre he saw an absurd adaptation of Sheridan's "*School for Scandal*," played by actors whose ardour exceeded their art. Then followed Florence, Naples, where he found Vesuvius grumbling on the verge of an eruption, but she obligingly postponed the outburst until after the great man had inspected her. Perhaps she was jealous! On his return to Naples he was taken very ill for several days and hovered between life and death, but eventually recovered to pay his respects to another's tomb after all, to wit, Virgil's. He then went to Rome in company with Sir Robert Comyn and William Etty, the painter. He was naturally very impressed with Rome, the city of Cæsar, Coriolanus, and Virginius. He pored over the works of art, and came to know them so well that his friend Comyn dubbed him a walking catalogue. He pondered in the Pantheon, in St. Peter's and Sta Maria, and probably posed in the Forum, the Coliseum, and on the Capitol!

It was with regret that he turned his back on the Eternal City and resumed his journey west; the more especially, as, owing to an accident to the road, he was unable to make use of his letter of introduction to Lord Byron at Pisa. At Milan on the journey home he visited the Scala, where he was immensely impressed with the acting of a pantomimist called Pellerina.

In Paris he saw Talma in "*Scylla*," and added another to the many testimonies to that great actor's transcendent genius. But he also heard something that caused him to wonder, and perhaps hastened his journey to London. A young Englishman he met at his hotel related having recently seen Young play *Hamlet* at Drury Lane. Macready, knowing of the existing arrangement by which each theatre bound itself not to engage any performer seceding from the other until after the expiration of a year, pooh-poohed the idea. Nevertheless, what the young man said was true, as he found on his return to London, where at Covent Garden there was a pretty state of things. Emery was dead. Young, Liston, and Miss Stephens had left and gone over to the other house, where Covent Garden was faced with a cast containing the names of Kean, Young, Munden, Liston, Dowton, Elliston, Terry, Miss Stephens, and Madame Vestris. Macready and Charles Kemble were the only two left at Covent Garden who could boast of any drawing power in themselves. They were simply without a leading lady, but Richard Lalor Sheil, whose new play of "*The Huguenot*" was in rehearsal, thought he had discovered another Miss O'Neill in Miss F. H. Kelly of Dublin. But both the play and the lady were failures! Macready was greatly disappointed at the play's failure, for he had believed very much in it and bestowed great care and attention upon his own part of *Polignac*. "*The Huguenot*" was shortly followed by "*Julian*," by Miss Mitford, which shared very nearly the same fate. Macready and the authoress were at first on terms of great friendship, which afterwards waned. Macready also added two new Shakespearean characters to his list, *Wolsey* and *King John*. The former remained one of his most popular parts.

It was now Macready's turn to secede from Covent Garden. The quarrel was caused principally by the oral clause in his agreement. At first he consented to arbitration, but they dilly-dallied and procrastinated so that he definitely decided to break with them, which was just exactly what they wanted. There is no doubt that, on the whole, Macready was the aggrieved party; at the same time, his was not the temperament to brook injustice with wisdom.

There now began for him a period that has been aptly described by Mr. William Archer as "The Doldrums." "A region of calms, squalls, and light baffling winds." This period was to last for thirteen years, during which time he was mainly to be engaged at Drury Lane Theatre.

His first engagement was for forty performances at a salary of £20 a night. He made his first appearance on 13th October, 1823, as *Virginius*. He then appeared in other Shakespearean characters, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Leontes*, which he played for the first time. On 18th November, 1823, he played the hero in Sheridan Knowles' "*Caius Gracchus*," which play was, and deserved to be, a failure. About this time he was further annoyed by the repetition of the "burning child" story, and the appearance of a paragraph in "John Bull," which criticized his acting, but applauded his bravery, caused a quarrel with the editor, Theodore Hook. Macready got the idea into his head, which he never got out of it, that he was the victim of an organized Press attack.

Elliston's, of Drury Lane, great idea when engaging Macready was that he and Kean should appear together. But this Kean would not hear of. He did not mind Young, he said, but would not act with

Macready. So that when he made his entrance on the scenes Macready had to make his exit. Kean's refusal could of course only bear one construction, and was a compliment to Macready, for Kean was never known to object to wiping the floor with any one if he thought he could do it.

Thus it was that Macready's first engagement was limited to the original forty performances, which were distributed over a period of nine months. But if his public life was unsatisfactory, his private affairs had their consolations. The day after the termination of his Drury Lane season he was married to his beloved Catherine, his "docile Griselda" as he called her. And she *must* have been docile. Catherine Frances Atkins had, it may be remembered, first attracted Macready's attention, unfavourably, at Glasgow in 1815. In 1820 he had met her again in Scotland, when she was his leading lady in more senses than one.

From that moment he took a strong "paternal" interest in her, and secured for her a good situation in his father's theatre at Bristol.

Three years later her father and brother were both drowned crossing the Irish Channel. This disaster had the effect of waking Macready to a true sense of his feelings. He came up to the scratch, proposed, and was accepted. A few months later, with a heart full of hope, he introduced her to his beloved sister Lætitia. Catherine was staying at Worthing, Macready was to play that night at Brighton. It was arranged that all three should post in the chaise together from Worthing to Brighton. Macready's feelings may be imagined when, at the very moment of their introduction, he observed a mutual aversion spring up between the two girls. Apparently they loathed each other on sight, and neither of them could speak a word. The original plan of the drive to Brighton had to be adhered to, and Macready must have had a lively time of it, sitting between the two malcontents, to each of whom he was really devoted, and could not have borne to be parted from either. But Lætitia, to do her justice, was very straight, and insisted upon Macready's fulfilling his plighted troth. It was therefore arranged that the marriage should be postponed for a time, whilst Catherine should be given every opportunity, by study and improvement at the hands of himself, his sister, and a respectable widow lady in Kensington, to fit herself to be the wife of such an one as William Charles Macready. Reading between the lines of Macready's autobiography, and taking one thing with another, it is obvious that Macready's brother and sister thought no small beer of themselves, that he had fallen in love with a charming, pretty little actress of no pretensions to education or birth, and had probably justified himself to his ultra genteel sister by making her out to be more than she was. But what she lacked in gentility and education she evidently compensated with common sense, and saw that with all his snobbery and irascibility Macready was a straight, good man, who would make a good husband. In course of time, too, she quite won over the sister, and the marriage was solemnized under the happiest of auspices at St. Pancras Church on 24th June, 1824.

They spent a happy little honeymoon in the south and west, visiting, amongst other places, Stonehenge, where they saw a man driving across the plain in a kite carriage. Macready then resumed his professional duties, visiting the south and north of England and Ireland, where the first signs of a distressing illness appeared. He made his reappearance at Drury Lane, 15th November, 1824, in the character of *Macbeth*. On 5th January, 1825, was produced Massinger's "*Fatal Dowry*," cleaned up and made presentable by Richard Lalor Sheil.

It was a great success and seemed in for a long run, when Macready was suddenly taken very seriously ill with internal inflammation, and unable to continue playing. He lay for some time between life and death, and Elliston, the manager, visited him, to be met with dolorous talk from the invalid about his approaching dissolution. Elliston was taking his departure depressed and shocked when the tragedian called him back, and it then became apparent that what he was really worrying about was not his approaching end so much as his approaching benefit! "Did Elliston think that '*Rob Roy*,' reduced to two acts, would be a good after-piece for that occasion?" Elliston left "the presence" quite reassured.

During Macready's illness the notorious case of Cox *v.* Kean had been tried, and Kean had made his unwise, if plucky, attempt to ride over the result. So Macready had the field practically to himself. He made his reappearance as *Romont* in "*The Fatal Dowry*" on 11th April, but the former success was not renewed, and it was withdrawn. Yet Knowles' "*William Tell*," a very much inferior play produced a month later, was successful, and the title-rôle became one of Macready's most popular parts.

On 2nd June, for his benefit, he played *Henry V*, followed by *Rob Roy*, so his "last wishes" seem to have been realized. He then divided his time between touring and rusticating with his Catherine in a charming little country retreat near Denbigh, though the pleasure of his holiday was discounted by an acrimonious controversy on the acting of the day in "Blackwood's Magazine."

The critic abused what he called the personal tricks and mannerisms of the three principal stars of the day, Kean, Macready and Young. He pointed out that no self-respecting author would write for the stage in the condition it then was.

Undoubtedly there was a great deal of truth in his contentions, but they were exaggerated, laid on with too heavy a bludgeon, and did more harm than good. Such things have happened in our own day, but if the critics really wish to remedy the state of affairs, they must remember that the true reformer does not drive, but leads.

The Pied Piper must play a very gentle, sweet tune if he wishes the actors to follow him. As a mass they are timid, and their sensibility exceeds their sense.

In the spring of 1826, Macready returned to "the Lane," then under the management of W. G. Elliston, a son of the Great, the Magnificent, R. W. E.! He played no new character, but appeared as *Hotspur* to the great Elliston's inglorious performance of *Falstaff*. At rehearsal Macready thought he was going to be a worthy successor to Quin and Henderson. But before the audience he failed ignominiously.

On its repetition, Elliston was seen to be very tottery and feeble in his gait, and before the end he collapsed on to the stage. The audience thought he was drunk, but Macready says that he had only been drugging himself with ether in consequence of feeling ill.

Macready then went for a short provincial tour, when, with his customary kindness of heart, he helped the Birmingham manager, Brunton, out of a serious difficulty. A thief had broken into the treasury and stolen all the takings after the night on which he made his scheduled appearance. The manager, who was depending upon the Macready takings for his artistes' salaries, was in despair. Macready not only forewent all claims to a share of the stolen receipts, but relieved the situation by giving his services gratis in *Virginius* on the Saturday night.

On 2nd September, 1826, he and his wife and sister set sail from Liverpool in the fastest packet of the time, and arrived at New York twenty-five days later. His contract was for £50 a performance, a contract which he had some difficulty in getting the slippery American impresario, Mr. Stephen Price, to commit to black and white. He made his first appearance in New York at the Park Theatre, 2nd October, 1826, and was very warmly received by the press and public, then reacting from its antagonistic attitude to Kean, who had recently paid his second visit.

On the whole, Macready does not seem to have been as favourably impressed by America as America was by him. He was received with enthusiasm at Boston. In addition to Boston and New York he played at Baltimore, Albany and Philadelphia. He visited the Niagara Falls, made the acquaintance of Thomas Emmet, the Irish patriot, then the leader of the New York Bar, and came for the first time in professional and amicable conflict with his future adversary Edwin Forrest, then a rising, if rugged, young actor of twenty. At some of his performances he was supported by Conway, an English actor who was making something of a reputation in the States. His farewell benefit was given in New York, 4th June, 1827, as *Macbeth* and *Delaval*, and as *Macbeth* he reappeared at Drury Lane on 12th November following. In the interim he had again been for a little tour on the Continent, visiting Genoa, Pisa, Florence, Milan, via Paris and Marseilles.

He divided his attention between Drury Lane and the provinces, playing one or two new characters but making no striking successes. His manager at Drury Lane was Stephen Price the American, the Frohman of the period, and between whom and Macready there was not much love lost. In April, 1828, he went to play a three weeks' engagement with a company of English players, under Abbot, in Paris, at the Salle Favart. His success was enormous, far exceeding that of Kemble's before, and Kean's after him. The French compared him favourably with their own great Talma. He played *Macbeth*, and was supported by Miss Smithson as *Lady Macbeth*. Later he played *Virginius*. Miss Smithson was regarded as a mediocre actress in England, but in Paris "La belle Smidson" caused a furore—Berlioz, the composer, fell in love with and married her. Shakespeare's success was almost as great as Smithson's, although the French freely criticized him and laughed at what they considered the absurdities of the Witches in "*Macbeth*" and the triviality of the handkerchief on *Othello*. The remark of a member of the audience, "*Mon Dieu*, *quel mélange!*" at the Witches' cauldron-mixture is delicious! The effect of the season on French dramatic art was considerable, and marked in the future work of Dumas, Victor Hugo, and others. Macready received £100 a week for his services. The following June and July he returned to Paris and repeated his former success, adding *Hamlet*, *William Tell*, and *Othello*, to his representations.

After this he did not appear again in London until 1830, but toured the provinces. On 11th April his father died. With some assistance from Macready the widow continued with the management of the Bristol theatre, which still remains in the hands of her descendants.

His tours were not always successful, as is evidenced by his diary, in which he records the sale of his Dublin and Cork engagements to Mr. Bunn for £600, of which £100 were returned in consequence of failure. On 31st July, 1830, he entered into an agreement with Lee of Drury Lane for three years, £30 a week and half a clear benefit for the first, and £40 and ditto for the remaining two. He made his reappearance at Drury Lane, 18th October, 1830, as *Virginius*, and on 15th December following made one of the great successes of his career as *Werner* in Byron's play of that name.

His first child, a daughter, Christina Letitia, was born on 26th December, 1830.

Macready now continued the somewhat uneven tenour of his way, alternating between Drury Lane, the provinces, and his pretty little country-home at Pinner. On 26th December, 1832, he appeared for the first time with Edmund Kean, playing *Iago* to the falling star's *Othello*. It was announced that they would alternate the parts, but they never did. Macready hated playing with Kean, who resorted to wretched tricks to keep him in proper subjection. Macready spoke of Kean as "that low man." Kean's description of Macready is unprintable! They played together for the last time 8th February, 1833. On 25th May Macready went down to Richmond to be a pall-bearer at Kean's funeral. On that occasion he first made the acquaintance, afterwards to ripen into sincere friendship, of John Forster. Though they had never been on anything approaching cordial terms Kean had always spoken highly of Macready's talent, and Macready enthusiastically of Kean's genius.

He continued to make fitful appearances at Drury Lane, sometimes varying the heavy parts by playing comedy, as in the character of *Lord Bellenden* in "*Men of Pleasure*." But he had to vie with other, and what may be called extraneous, attractions. A German Opera came to Drury Lane with Schröder-Devrient as the star. Macready saw her, and thought her divine. Malibran also made her first appearance on the English stage, and Taglioni danced.

All three of these great artistes appeared for his benefit on 10th June, when he himself played *Joseph Surface*.

Macready was now preparing for a great event. He was studying "*King Lear*," and gave it a trial trip in the provinces when, 29th August, 1833, he first played it. According to his own account it was a failure, but he determined by study and hard work to turn it into a success.

On returning to town he was disgusted to find that Alfred Bunn had become sole lessee and manager of Drury Lane and Covent Garden theatres. There seemed to be no escaping the brute, who is generally supposed to be the prototype of Thackeray's "Mr. Dolphin." Macready cordially detested him, and was not one whit mollified to find himself advertised to make his reappearance as *Prospero*, a part for which he had quite an unreasoning aversion. However, he fell in with Bunn's plans, and worked very hard indeed, playing, amongst other characters, *Macbeth*, *Wolsey*, *Hotspur*, *Leontes*, *The Stranger*, *Werner*. On 21st November, 1833, he appeared for the first time as *Antony* to the *Cleopatra* of Miss Phillips. The play was insufficiently rehearsed, insufficiently mounted, he himself was in a bad state of health, and considered his "a hasty, unprepared, unfinished performance." So disgusted was he, in fact, that he offered Bunn a premium to release him from his engagement, but Bunn politely but firmly refused to do so. Byron's "*Sardanapalus*" was produced on 10th April. Macready never believed in it, but played the name part with his customary care and vigour. On 23rd May, 1833, he appeared, for his benefit, for the first time as *King Lear*. His nervousness and anxiety prevented him doing himself full justice, but as the play wore on he improved, and on his repeating the performance on 26th May, his success was assured. The text of the play was revised, and Tate's wretched "improvements" removed, but the *Fool* was not yet restored.

At the close of this season Macready gave some performances of *Lear* and *Hamlet* at Covent Garden, feeling strange, as he states in his diary, at returning to the scene of his old and early triumphs. The following winter season Bunn seems to have dispensed with his services, at which he grumbled as usual. Yet he seems to have been more anxious to get rid of Bunn than he was for Bunn to get rid of him. He betook himself to the country, first to Dublin, where he played *Melantius* in his own version, called "*The Bridal*," of Beaumont and Fletcher's "*Maid's Tragedy*."

Sheridan Knowles assisted him in this, and they quarrelled over their respective shares in the work.

In December, 1834, Macready "commenced manager" at Bath and Bristol, in partnership with a Mr. Woulds. In addition to himself, Macready had as members of his company, Mrs. Lovell, Mr. and Mrs. Wood, Dowton, and William Farren. The success of the Bristol theatre was completely counterbalanced by the failure of that at Bath, and Macready lost a large sum of money in the speculation.

The union of the two London houses was now dissolved, but Bunn was the sole manager of Drury Lane. Not without serious misgivings Macready undertook to join him for the season of 1835–6 at a salary of £30 a week for over thirty weeks. He was to play four times a week, to be subject to no forfeit or fine, and to have the right to refuse any part he thought too melodramatic! He opened on 1st October by playing *Macbeth*, on his own showing, very badly. He says he "felt almost desperate," and appears to have tried too hard and overplayed himself. *Macbeth* was followed by *Jaques*, *Hamlet*, *Hotspur*, *Othello*, and others, and he was just getting back to his old form when the immense success of Balfe's "*Siege of Rochelle*," followed by the still greater one of Planché's "*Jewess*," caused him to be shelved until 3rd February. During that time his salary was, of course, paid him, but he was furious at the indignity of being kept off the stage by trash, and his temper was not improved by Bunn's breaking his contract to produce "*The Bridal*" "immediately after Christmas." The relations between his manager and himself became more and more strained. On 3rd February, 1835, Macready reappeared as *Othello*. A few days later he created the part of *Bertulphe* in Lovell's "*The Provost of Bruges*," supported by Ellen Tree, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean, as *Constance*. In this he made an artistic success, but

Bunn a financial failure. However, that gentleman had only to put up "*The Jewess*" to pack the house again. This he did, supporting it with Auber's "*Bronze Horse*" and a wretched entertainment called "*Chevy Chase.*" Bunn now began to make further rash experiments, and on 16th April announced "*The Corsair*" with "*William Tell*" and Macready as an afterpiece. For the sake of his children's welfare, Macready swallowed the affront, and the still greater one on 29th April, when the first three acts of "*Richard III*," to be followed by "*The Jewess*" and the first act of "*Chevy Chase*," were announced. But, though he swallowed it, he could not digest it. As he left the stage after the performance he passed the door of Bunn's office. Yielding to a hasty impulse he threw it open. There sat the smug manager in an easy chair at his table, in the full limelight of a shaded lamp. "You damned scoundrel!" said Macready, "How dare you use me in this manner? Take that!" and Bunn got a smart backhander across the face. "And that!" as Macready, to use his own words, "dug his fist as effectively into him as he could!" "Ah, you would bite, would you?" Bunn had Macready's little finger between his teeth. "Murder, murder!" shouted Bunn, and the prompter, the call-boy, and several others rushed into the room to find the rough-and-tumble had reached the sofa, where Bunn was now top-dog. The combatants were then separated, Macready to his dressing-room, where he was followed by his friends Wallace, Forster, Dow, and others. Bunn to his bed, which he did not leave for three weeks. The upshot of it all was a lawsuit. Macready expected it to be a duel, and was ready to come out, but Bunn took refuge in the plea that his adversary was no gentleman.

As a result of the lawsuit Macready, who was defended by Talfourd, got off somewhat easily with the payment of £150 damages.

But it was many a long day before he got over the blow to his self-respect, or more probably self-love ; if he had had more self-respect he never would have done it. It was certainly unpardonable, but not by any means unprovoked, and its impulsiveness freed him from any charge of cowardice. Macready thought it would do him incalculable harm in his profession, but on the contrary, it did him good, and marked another turning-point in his career.

Osbaldiston of Covent Garden saw his opportunity and seized it. He offered Macready an engagement at a good salary, and on 11th May he made his first appearance in public since the assault. He had a very agreeable surprise. He was painfully anxious as to his reception, but hid his nervousness and stepped boldly on to the stage. To his extreme surprise and pleasure the house rose at him, hats and handkerchiefs and cheers rent the air. At the close of the performance he made a straightforward and manly speech in which he thanked the audience for their kindness, but made no attempt to excuse himself for his intemperate and imprudent act. It may have been the former, but it certainly was not the latter, at any rate from a political point of view. It added immensely to his popularity, and to his zest in his art, for he determined to live it down by playing up! "*Macbeth*" was followed by "*Virginius*" and afterwards by "*The Stranger*," in which Miss Helen Faucit appeared for the first time. On 26th May, his benefit, Talfourd's "*Ion*" was very successfully produced, for the first time. Ellen Tree, afterwards Mrs. Charles Kean, was "leading lady" and played

Clemanthe. The author received an enthusiastic "call" at the end of the play, but Macready would not let him take it. After the play, which was produced on Talfourd's birthday, he gave a supper at his house. Macready was, as he termed it, happily placed between Wordsworth and Landor, with Browning opposite. In the course of conversation Wordsworth slyly quoted the lines from "*The Borderers*" beginning, "Action is transitory—a step—a blow," but Macready, who describes himself as being tranquilly happy, did not "rise." Landor remarked that he had not the constructive ability to write a play, and could only set people talking. All the same, he had written one, "*Count Julian*," and would send it to Macready. Miss Mitford, who was also present, seems to have hinted that she would write one if Macready would undertake to act it.

At the close of the season Macready went on a short provincial tour, and then rejoined Covent Garden for twenty-two weeks at a salary of £40 a week. He opened on 3rd October as *Macbeth*, followed by *Werner*. The remainder of 1836 was mainly given to supporting Charles Kemble in his long-drawn-out farewell performances.

On 4th January, 1837, "*The Duchesse de la Vallière*," by E. L. Bulwer, Esq., M.P., was produced, Macready playing *Bragelone*. It achieved some success, but did not deserve any.

On 1st May Browning's "*Strafford*" was produced, with a success quite contrary to Macready's expectations. Macready's season with Osbaldiston closed on 3rd June, when he played *Othello* to the *Desdemona* of Miss Faucit. He was now the acknowledged chief of his profession, and though cordially disliked by many on account of his bad temper and overbearing disposition, was respected by all, and affectionately regarded by quite a large circle of devoted and distinguished friends, among whom were Forster, Dickens, Browning, and Talfourd.

On 12th June, 1837, he began a season under Benjamin Webster at the Haymarket, where, on the 26th of the same month, his own version of "*The Bridal*" was produced for the first time in London, with some success. He again played *Melantius*. The play was afterwards published with a preface and notes by Macready, who took great trouble with the work.

Macready had for some time been contemplating management, but had been prevented from taking the step by excessive caution and the fear of losing his money, and imperilling his children's chances of a future provision. But he finally decided on taking the plunge, and on 30th September, 1837, after much care and preparation, he opened Covent Garden with the production of "*A Winter's Tale*," in which he played *Leontes* exceedingly poorly, according to his own account. He was received with tremendous enthusiasm and spoke an address by Talfourd.

On entering the theatre he breathed a pious prayer that God would look upon his management with favour, and registered the resolution to forget that he was a manager when he was an actor, and vice versa!

He surrounded himself with an admirable company, including Samuel Phelps, James Anderson, James Warde, George Bennett, Bartley, Harley, Drinkwater, Meadows, Tyrone Power, Miss Helen Faucit, Mrs. Glover, and Miss Priscilla Horton, known in our time as Mrs. German Reed; he also, as the custom was, engaged a company of English singers and of pantomimists. The season did not open very well, in spite of his own enthusiastic greeting, and he is said to have lost £3000 by Christmas-time. But the Christmas pantomime soon put that right; he introduced certain good reforms into management, abolishing the lying puffs in the playbills, and the custom which had existed from time immemorial of allowing certain professional ladies a recognized intrusion into some parts of the theatre.

Another characteristic innovation was that of sending free passes to people distinguished in Science, Literature, and Art. Amongst these was Carlyle, from whom he had a gracious letter of acknowledgment.

On 25th January, 1838, "*King Lear*" was produced with the *Fool* restored, and played by Miss Priscilla Horton. Much attention was paid to the scenery and effects, which were on a scale never before attempted. Macready's own performance of *Lear*, though *he* did not seem altogether satisfied with it, was extremely well received and reviewed. On 15th February "*The Lady of Lyons*" was produced, and after a somewhat cold commencement developed into an enormous success, which would have been still greater if Macready had permitted it to run for all it was worth.

But from the first he sternly set his face against long runs, acted up to his principles, and lost a goodly sum of money thereby. In "*The Lady of Lyons*" he played *Claude Melnotte* and Helen Faucit *Pauline*. At first the authorship was kept a secret. Lord Lytton, or Mr. Lytton Bulwer as he then was, behaved very handsomely and refused to accept any payment for his play.

But Macready intended that Shakespeare should be the principal *raison d'être* of his management, and so by way of apology for the success of "*The Lady of Lyons*" put all his mind to the grand production of "*Coriolanus*," which took place on 10th March to an indifferent house, very much to Macready's distress. Much care had been bestowed upon the production and especially upon the crowds, and it even woke the enthusiasm of the still sore Bunn. But the papers only noticed it with scant favour, although Macready's *Coriolanus* was spoken of very favourably, and indeed too favourably by his friend John Forster, who said it was superior to Kemble's, making a most unfortunate allusion to that great actor's abstraction of Roman-nosed grandeur. Now Macready's nose was anything but Roman, and Forster's unfortunate remark drew from the witty James Smith the following epigram:—

> "What scenes of grandeur does this play disclose,
> Where all is Roman—save the Roman's nose."

Macready continued, whenever possible, to produce Shakespeare, but the success of the season after "*The Lady of Lyons*" was its last production, some wretched trash of Sheridan Knowles, called "*Woman's Wit.*" On the whole the season had been, artistically and financially, extremely successful, and Macready was pleased with the results.

The second season commenced on Monday, 24th September, 1838. In the interim Macready had appeared at the Haymarket, under Webster's management, as *Kitely*, and as *Thoas* in the successful production of Talfourd's "*Athenian Captive.*" His company was now strengthened by the inclusion of Mr. and Mrs. Vandenhof, an excellent couple in the second rank of artists. These artists, together with Phelps, opened the season with revivals of "*Coriolanus*" and "*Cym-*

beline." The first important production took place on 13th October, when "*The Tempest*" was produced on a great scale of magnificence, Macready, of course, playing *Prospero*. The production was a great success, ran for over fifty performances, at an average of over £200 per performance, and could have run very much longer if Macready had permitted it. The next important new production was "*Richelieu*," or "*The Conspiracy*," by Sir E. L. Bulwer, Bart. The play was produced with great care and trouble, and Macready himself had not a little to do with the actual writing of it. Acting on his advice, Bulwer practically turned it inside out, and after that it was submitted to a committee of experts, amongst whom was Robert Browning, before being finally produced. They were well repaid for their trouble, and the play was an enormous success.

Macready played *Richelieu* and Miss Faucit *Julie de Mortemar*. No new play was now needed for some time, but "*As You Like It*" was revived for Miss Faucit's benefit, Macready playing *Jaques*. Macready was now experiencing and detesting the cares of management, and determined to bring them to an end with a real flourish. He gave all his attention to a huge revival of "*Henry V*," and not only his own attention, but that of his friends Bulwer, Dickens, Forster, Maclise, and others.

They attended most of the rehearsals and made themselves a nuisance to the actors, Forster especially so. It was said that Macready exhibited wonderful self-control in the manner in which he would turn from swearing at his company to smiling at his friends. The self-control would have been more wonderful if he had sworn or smiled at both!

The production was a great success, Macready personally not so great.

He never could get used to his armour, in spite of the fact that he devoted hours to walking about in it, sitting in it, and doubtless growling in it. The season and, as he fondly hoped, his management, came to an end on 16th July. He had a tremendous ovation, and says he acted "*Henry V*" better than ever before. The stage was piled high with laurel wreaths and flowers at the end of the performance, and the company cheered their chief to his dressing-room.

On 20th July Macready's followers, and they were many, gave him a complimentary dinner at the Freemasons' Tavern. The Duke of Sussex was in the chair, surrounded by a company in which were the most distinguished in science, literature, and art.

Macready sat on the Duke's right, thinking of his speech and looking grim and pale and, as Lord Lytton remarked, like a baffled tyrant, but the tyrant had a soft spot in his heart, which was touched when he saw his beloved Catherine up in the gallery.

The Covent Garden management made some attempt to induce Macready to enter on a third term of management, but the conditions he proposed and the safeguards he required were so unreasonable that they could not come to terms. The fact is he hated care and anxiety, and welcomed an opportunity, which now arose, of applying for the post of Reader of Plays to the Lord Chamberlain, which Charles Kemble's hourly-expected death would vacate. Had Macready received the appointment he says he would have left the stage at once, but fortunately for his public and himself he did not. It was given to Kemble's son, John Mitchel Kemble, a distinguished Anglo-Saxon scholar.

Macready also applied to the Lord Chamberlain for a "personal licence" to perform legitimate drama whenever and wherever he pleased, a characteristic application which was refused.

He now migrated to the Haymarket, where he played under Webster's management, with the exception of a short interval at Drury Lane, for two and a half years. On the whole he got on well with Webster, though, of course, not without grumbling. He played principally his old Shakespearean characters, and created *Norman* in a play of Bulwer's, called "*The Sea Captain*," who though successful at the time, was not a survivor. His engagement at the Haymarket came to an end on 15th January, 1840, and on 20th January he appeared at Drury Lane as *Macbeth*, under the management of Hammond. On 22nd January Haynes' drama of "*Mary Stuart*," at first and with more propriety called "*Rizzio*," was produced. Macready played *Ruthven*. Hammond's season failed badly at the end of February, and Macready gave his services gratuitously for four nights for the benefit of the unfortunate company. On 16th March he was back at the Haymarket, and a series of revivals followed. Talfourd's "*Glencoe*" was successfully produced on 23rd May. It had been given Macready to read anonymously by Dickens, but the actor was cute enough to suspect the author to be at least an imitator of Talfourd. Other new plays followed, but the great success was Bulwer's "*Money*," produced on 8th December.

It would have been produced earlier, but Macready was mourning for the death of his little daughter Joan, aged three. He made a great success as *Alfred Evelyn*, a part he only accepted to please Bulwer, and is said to have described it as a "damned walking gentleman." In his diary he speaks of it as "ineffective and inferior."

The play achieved the then colossal run of eighty consecutive performances, and was revived again the following season, when it ran for twenty-nine more. It has, of course, been revived many times since, and has become quite a classic. On 1st November, Macready created a new villain called *Ugone Spinola* in a play called "*Nina Sforza*," by R. Z. Troughton. *Ugone* was well named, for he has never been seen since.

The season ended on 7th December with "*The Lady of Lyons*."

Macready then did some performances in the provinces, and on 4th October re-entered into management, this time at Drury Lane. Most of his old company came back to support him, some of them making a substantial sacrifice of salary to do so, sufficient evidence, as Mr. Archer points out in his "Life," that his bark was worse than his bite. Miss Faucit, Miss P. Horton, Mr. and Mrs. Keeley, Messrs. Phelps, Anderson, Bennett, and Compton furnished very strong support. This term of management opened on 27th December, 1841, and closed on 14th June, 1843. During that time some new plays were produced, and Macready increased his reputation by improved performances of his old parts, especially *Shylock* and *King John*. Of the new plays, Westland Marston's "*Patrician's Daughter*" was the most successful.

A pantomime called "*Acis and Galatea*," with scenery by Stanfield and music by Handel, was a huge success. Browning's "*Blot on the 'Scutcheon*" was a failure, so was Darley's "*Plighted Troth*." This was a real error of judgment on Macready's part. He had firmly believed in the play, and lost his temper, and with it his self-control, at its reception. He played the part of *Grimwood* and was supposed to be lying dead, when one of the actors accidentally trod on his hand. As a result the corpse sat up and swore at the offender in full view and hearing of the audience.

This clinched the matter, and the evening which had begun in expectation, was continued in irritation, closed in ridicule. On his benefit Macready played *Benedick*, but was scarcely a success. His career as a manager closed with a performance of "*Macbeth*," amid scenes of unparalleled enthusiasm, described in his diary as "grand and awful."

A few days later he was presented by a distinguished company of friends and admirers, presided over by the Duke of Cambridge, with a fearful and wonderful silver symbolic vase, and an address setting forth that his management "Formed an Epoch in Theatrical Annals." And a wretchedly uncomfortable epoch it was, too, for all concerned, including Macready himself. There is no doubt that although he had many brilliant and artistic successes, and improved his position as an actor immensely, as a manager he was not an unqualified success. He had none of the gentler qualities, or such as he had were reserved for the outer of his lay friends and the inner circle of his family. His company respected him and admired him as an artist and an actor, but they had no affection for him, and he apparently none for them. He never mentions them in his diary as a company. He was a star of stars. As a judge of a play he was, on the whole, good. He has been accused of not supporting contemporary talents, but there does not seem to have been any to support. Moreover, he might justly claim to have had no small share in discovering and demonstrating Knowles, Talfourd, and Bulwer Lytton. But he certainly seems to have proved himself, and the public to have considered him to be a very fine, if not very great actor.

The remainder of his acting days were spent in a strenuous endeavour to amass a sufficient fortune to retire on comfortably and leave a substantial provision for his children. For this he depended upon provincial and American tours in his old characters.

He only created two new characters, both at the Princess's, one in 1846, when he played *James V* in the "*King of the Commons*," by the Rev. J. White, and the other, *Philip Van Artevelde*, in his own adaptation of Sir Henry Taylor's play of that name. Neither of the parts nor the plays were successful.

The second American tour of his career began in September, 1843. He visited the principal towns in the States and Canada and achieved a great social, artistic and, more important still to him at that time, financial success. He was banqueted and lionized to his heart's content, and added to his acquaintance Emerson, Longfellow, Prescott, Webster, and other famous Americans. His most popular performance was *Hamlet*, followed by *Macbeth* and then *Othello*. (One would almost think the audience went to see the plays, not Macready!) On one occasion he was supported by Charlotte Cushman as *Lady Macbeth*, and was impressed by her talents, and especially by the fact that she "showed mind and sympathy with me." *Vide* the Diary! On his return from America he paid another visit to Paris, whither he was accompanied by Helen Faucit. He again had an artistic triumph, and won the warm commendation of Gautier, Hugo, Dumas, Georges Sand, and Sue.

On his return to England he divided his attention between the provinces and London, appearing in the metropolis at the Princess's, Surrey, and Marylebone theatres, and on 10th July, 1848, at a Royal Command benefit of three acts of "*Henry VIII*," Queen Katherine was played by Charlotte Cushman. It was followed by the "*Jealous Wife*," in which he played *Oakley* to Mrs. Warner's *Mrs. Oakley*.

Late in the same year he played his last and most memorable visit to America. Memorable, not on account of a great artistic triumph, but of a battle royal and scenes of rioting that far surpassed the worst that Kean ever had to face. Moreover, Kean's disturbances were, at any rate, largely brought about by his own misconduct; Macready, though he fanned the flame by his foolishness and tactlessness, had little or nothing to do with kindling it. The distinguished friends with whom he loved to surround himself were principally responsible for that. Dickens and Forster especially. The former by the publication of *Martin Chuzzlewit*, which set all America in a blaze. Forster, by his rash criticism of the American actor Edwin Forrest, set blazing the particular tongue of flame which nearly consumed Macready. But, fortunately, it did little more than singe him. Forrest was an admirable actor of the self-made, self-educated order, as different from Macready as he well could be. Macready had seen him, and predicted a great future for him during the first American tour in 1826. Ten years later Forrest came to England, when it was seen that he had developed into a very good actor of a somewhat blustering and swashbuckling type. During this visit Macready showed Forrest much hospitality, entertained him at his house at Elstree, and at the

Garrick Club, and so on. They again met on perfectly friendly terms during Macready's American tour of 1843–4, and their friendliness continued in spite of the efforts of some local Canadian critics to work up a feud between them.

The real trouble seems to have begun in Paris in 1844. Forrest was in Paris at the time Macready was the rage, and attempted to get an engagement with Mitchell, Macready's manager, that he might show what an American could do. This Mitchell refused, and Forrest at once, and without any evidence whatever, attributed the refusal to Macready's influence, which is just exactly what a silly, vain man would do. Forrest then came to London, appeared at the Princess's, and because all his performances, especially his *Macbeth*, did not meet with immediate approval, went about saying that Macready and his friend Forster had "packed" the house and influenced the press. Forster certainly did a very foolish thing. Whilst admitting and applauding with sound criticism Forrest's many successes, especially his *King Lear*, he ridiculed his failures, and wrote a paragraph on his *Macbeth* which no self-respecting paper should have published. The effect of Forrest's failure was that his London engagement was cut short. A year later Macready was playing in "*Hamlet*" at Edinburgh.

On the words "*I must be idle*," spoken immediately before the play scene, Macready was wont to dance a few steps and wave his handkerchief jauntily, quite a good little piece of business, said to have been originated by Edmund Kean. On this particular occasion Forrest happened to be in one of the boxes, and hissed loud and long at this *pas de mouchoir*, as he sarcastically termed it.

Macready only waved the more, and bowed derisively and contemptuously at the individual, whose identity did not transpire till afterwards. Macready's bow was quite unjustifiable, an actor who put his art first would never have done it. Nor would any artist have *hissed* the "*pas de mouchoir*." At most he would have dismissed it as a false note. Two insensate, vain men were now at daggers drawn. The public take extraordinary interest in the most trivial theatrical matters, and the incident was magnified and exaggerated until it assumed almost international importance, and Macready had no sooner set foot in America in the fall of 1848 when he found a large portion of the public and the press arrayed against him. Again his vanity fanned the flame, and he allowed himself to be drawn into making speeches.

The first disturbance took place at Philadelphia, where a rotten egg was thrown upon the stage. Macready made a speech, denying that he had ever shown any hostility towards Forrest by word or deed. Forrest thereupon published a letter in the Philadelphia papers summing up his accusations against Macready and his "toady" Forster.

The document exhibited more bad temper than good taste, and referred to Macready as a "superannuated driveller," which, if he continued his silly speeches, he was certainly in danger of becoming. Macready then contemplated a libel suit, and sent to England to collect evidence. Whilst the matter remained in abeyance he had quite a pleasant tour, financially and artistically successful in the south and west. In the beginning of May he returned to New York, and prepared for his farewell performances. At the same time he published his "Replies from England." They showed that in one instance at least he was wrong, and unfortunately a most important instance, that which concerned his friend John Forster.

Knowing that Forster had been ill in 1845, Macready had asserted emphatically and publicly that Forster had written no criticisms, good, bad, or indifferent, of Forrest. But he had, and had written the foolish and undignified paragraphs to which we have alluded. However, acting on the wise advice of his American lawyer, Macready did not pursue his libel action, but turned all his attention to his farewell performances.

In spite of the fact that Forrest was playing and being wildly acclaimed in New York, Macready seems to have had no misgivings. Was it the complacent calm of self-assurance? At any rate, he opened at the Astor Place Opera House on 7th May, 1848, with, as usual, *Macbeth*. Forrest was announced to appear at the Broadway Theatre in the same character. Ominous sign! At the words

> *"What rhubarb, senna, or what purgative drug*
> *Would scour these English hence?"*

spoken, as one can easily imagine, with great gusto by Forrest, the whole audience rose and cheered. After all, it was an opportunity too good to be missed!

At Astor Place things were also happening. One half the audience was cheering, the other half hissing Macready. He was going stolidly through his part without a word being heard.

Unfortunately the hissers were in the majority. They howled and they hooted. They hung out banners, calling him a liar and codfish aristocrat; the latter at least he would have loved to have been. "No apologies," said another banner. Macready had no intention of offering any. Then they threw copper cents, rotten eggs, potatoes, and chunks of wood, a bottle of asafœtida, which broke over his costume and stank as only asafœtida can. But he still held on most manfully and bravely supported by the company, who attempted to sympathize with him whenever he came "off," and here he made another characteristic mistake by giving the haughty reply that the only thing that caused him concern was "the disgrace such people inflicted on the character of the country!"

The climax came when chairs were pulled up and thrown from the gallery. Macready faced them quite tranquilly and unmoved, then told the prompter to ring down the curtain, feeling he had now quite fulfilled his obligations to Messrs. Niblo and Hackett.

This was done, and for the time being the rioters gained the day. But they were to pay dearly for their triumph.

Macready at first determined to abandon all idea of appearing again, but a petition asking him to do so, signed by many of the most representative citizens of New York, induced him to change his mind, and he decided to act again on Thursday, 10th March. Meanwhile the "Replies from England," already alluded to, had arrived, and were published on the 8th. Their publication did not improve matters much.

When the curtain rose on "*Macbeth*" on Thursday night the house was ominously full inside and the streets so outside, practically with men only. Gangs of policemen were stationed in various strategic positions in the auditorium. Macready's entrance was the signal for a huge shout of applause mingled with groans. The play proceeded at once. There were *no* speeches. A placard held up before the footlights, set forth that if the friends of law and order would maintain silence the malcontents would be more easily recognized and dealt with. These gentlemen occupied principally the pit, and howled and shook their fists at Macready all through the first act.

At a given signal at the end of the act the police swooped down upon the rowdies and, by a clever manœuvre, cleared them from the house. Four of the ringleaders had previously been imprisoned in a room under the pit, when an attempt to set fire to the house was fortunately frustrated. That such a thing was meditated at all shows the condition things were in.

Outside, the theatre was in a state of siege. The mob had, unfortunately, found a supply of loose paving-stones, shattered the windows and broke through the shutters, and the great stones were shot through among the audience. But the play proceeded, and Mrs. Coleman Pope, who played *Lady Macbeth*, in the true spirit of the character, stuck gamely to her husband's side, and Macready acted for all he was worth. When he went to his dressing-room after the third act he found it flooded with water, the rioters' missiles having burst some pipes overhead. During the fourth act things got worse. But in the fifth they were quieter, and Macready acted his very best to little groups of people huddled together for safety in corners of the auditorium. At the close he was loudly cheered and called before the curtain. He came forward, bowed, expressed his thanks in dumb show, then took his farewell of the American stage for ever.

He then retired to his dressing-room to change and dress. Whilst he was doing so, surrounded by anxious friends, the rattle of musketry was heard, then again and again. Then all was still. The military had fired on the mob.

It was now obvious that Macready was in real danger of his life. He and his friends held a hurried consultation, and it was decided that he should exchange overcoats and caps with one of the other actors, and accompanied by a friend make his way out of the theatre among the last remnant of the audience. He had no fear of being recognized by the crowd. The manœuvre was successfully carried out, and he made his way with his friend to the latter's house, not, however, without being recognized by one or two friendly members of the crowd, who whispered to him not to walk so fast.

At the friend's house a council of war was held, and it was decided that he must leave New York without delay. A carriage and pair were ordered to come in the small hours of the morning and take a doctor to a gentleman's house near New Rochelle.

Macready, who was unable to sleep, sat smoking and talking by the fire until the carriage arrived and drove him safely from the city. At New Rochelle he boarded the train for Boston, and was recognized by some fellow-passengers, who, however, treated him with respectful courtesy. At Boston he went straight to the house of his friend George Curtis. But even there, in spite of the fact that the Mayor personally called upon him and guaranteed his safety, he did not feel easy. Real relief did not come until ten days later when he was safely on board the "Hibernia," homeward bound.

"I never," he says in his diary, "felt such relief as in planting my foot on that vessel's deck."

The full story of the battle, when it became known, showed a terrible state of affairs. The first batch of soldiery called up, cavalry, not having firearms, were *actually repulsed* by the mob. When the infantry appeared on the scenes they were soon surrounded by the rioters, and their commanders told the Sheriff that unless they were allowed to shoot they would be annihilated. The Sheriff then gave his permission, and the troops were ordered to fire. The first volley was fired over the heads of the mob, who thinking that as no damage was done the soldiers were only armed with blank cartridge, charged again.

This time the order was given to fire low; several people fell, and the mob began to waver. Then for a few moments a pitched battle took place, in which of course the mob were utterly worsted; the soldiers captured the space around the theatre, and trained two brass cannon loaded with grape-shot to command the Broadway and the Bowery respectively.

After the battle seventeen were counted dead, and there were many wounded. Amongst both were many harmless onlookers, more curious than prudent, who had no interest in the actors' quarrel. The soldiers bivouacked for the night on the battlefield. There is no doubt that Macready would have had short shrift if he had been caught. Whilst concealed in his friend's house, an omnibus had driven furiously by pursued by an angry mob. Later Macready heard that one of the mob had called out, "Macready's in that bus; they've killed twenty of us, and by God, we'll kill him!" And doubtless they would have. The result would have been a gasp of horror all over England, more bitter feeling and quite possibly a war, and all, to all appearances, the result of a jealous actor's hiss. But that was not the real cause. The real underlying trouble was the smothered rage and intense hatred caused by Dickens' and Mr. Trollope's writings on America, and also class hatred, Macready being regarded as a favourite actor of the upper classes and Forrest as one of the people.

These were the more serious and deep-lying causes that kindled the flame, but for fanning it Forrest and Macready were certainly to blame, the former especially, for not only having fanned it, but rekindled if when it showed signs of dying down. Macready's foolish speeches, too, did little good. For his splendid bravery, when he was really in danger, no praise can be too high. He was calm, cool and collected throughout.

He arrived back in London 7th June, 1849. On 22nd June he was sent for to Buckingham Palace, where he was requested by Queen Victoria to play *Brutus* and *Hotspur* at the Windsor Theatricals. *Brutus* he accepted, but according to his diary he intimated that if he was to play two nights it must be in some character other than *Hotspur*. One can scarcely imagine Macready "intimating" anything to Royalty, anywhere except in his diary!

The performance took place 1st February, 1850. Macready only played *Brutus*, and found the time during which Her Majesty's servants had to wait Her Majesty's pleasure before ringing up "a state of irritable expectation." This was the only occasion upon which he ever appeared with Charles Kean, whom he did not like and was wont to refer to as "that young man with the clever father." After the performance Kean sent him a courteous message, to which he replied that all messages must be sent to him through his solicitor, churlish insolence which was only excused by the fact that Macready was beside himself with anxiety for his beloved eldest daughter Christina, or "Nina," as he called her, who had recently sickened with what was feared to be a hopeless malady. She died on the 24th of the month, and was buried with her sister at Kensal Green. Macready had the not uncommon characteristic of cloaking his anxiety with anger.

His time was now occupied with farewell provincial tours and two London seasons at the Haymarket. The first began on 8th October, 1849, and closed exactly two months later. He only played *Macbeth, Lear*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, supported by his old comrades Keeley, Mrs. Warner and Miss P. Horton. The next Haymarket season lasted from 28th October, 1850, to 3rd February, 1851. During it he played all his great parts, and also on 2nd December, 1850, for the first time in London, *Richard II.* It was a great but unsuccessful production, played, Macready says, "with singular fidelity to the text." On 12th November of the same year he read "*Hamlet*" to the boys of his old school, Rugby, in aid of the Shakespeare House Fund. He made many last appearances, but on 26th February, 1851, really made at Drury Lane his last appearance for ever! The play was, of course, "*Macbeth.*" Mrs. Warner was *Lady Macbeth;* Samuel Phelps closed his own theatre for the night in order to play *Macduff*. Huge crowds, amongst whom was J. L. Toole, had gathered long before two o'clock, and as the day wore on other crowds came to look at that crowd. And when the curtain rose, "What a sight it was!" writes G. H. Lewes. "Glorious, triumphant, affecting!" He goes on to say that *Macduff's* sword, when it pierced *Macbeth*, pierced also the bosom of every member of the audience, for the passing of *Macbeth* was, to them, the passing of Macready. And certainly *Macbeth* seems to have passed with *Macready*. The English stage has never had a great one since.

At the close of the performance Macready came forward in plain clothes and made a speech, a little deliberate and prepared, according to Lewes, but that was a fault on the right side. The great actor presented a pathetic picture as he stood hat in hand, dressed in deep black, still in mourning for his beloved daughter, to address the wildly cheering audience.

After it was all over all his old friends, Forster, Dickens, Lytton, Jerrold and his comrades in art, gathered round him in his dressing-room. He bestowed upon all the ladies a kiss, and upon the men various of his properties as mementoes. Finally, when all had left, with the exception of Forster, he sent for his children, and for the first time in their lives they entered their father's dressing-room. Macready never encouraged theatre-going in his family.

A large crowd collected outside the theatre, and cheered him in more senses than one as he drove off. Three days latter came the inevitable dinner. It was held in the Hall of Commerce. Sir Edward Lytton Bulwer was in the chair.

The Prince Consort had been asked to take it, but had declined, saying that such a thing was impossible at a dinner of personal compliment to any one, however eminent, but adding many words of commendation of the actor on his own and the Queen's behalf.

Sir E. L. Bulwer, in proposing the health of the guest of the evening, rightly laid stress on the peculiar evenness and comprehension of Macready's genius. Macready in reply emphasised the necessity for hard work in an actor, apologized for the meagre success of his own attempts as a manager to restore the drama to its rightful place in the world of art, and pointed to Phelps as a possible successor to complete the work, which has not yet been completed.

Dickens made a speech, Forster read Tennyson's "Ode to W. C. Macready," and Bunsen, the Prussian Minister, made the most interesting speech of the evening, in which he stated that no true German concealed the debt which all German dramatic literature owed to Shakespeare, and also drew the company's attention to Ludwig Tieck's prophecy regarding the guest of the evening, uttered in 1817.

The whole company leaped to its feet and cheered when old Charles Kemble rose to reply for "The Stage." Thackeray proposed the health of Mrs. Macready.

The following day Macready, accompanied by his wife and family, retired to Sherborne, in Dorsetshire, where he had bought his long-wished-for "cottage," as substantial as such cottages usually are.

We will not follow him into his retirement. Suffice to say that it was a long one, twenty-two years, passed partly at Sherborne and partly at Cheltenham, whither he removed later for the sake of his son's education. Moreover, the twilight of his days was darkened by many clouds.

First his wife, his dear Catherine, the little fair-haired Scottish lassie of the tartan dress, who had won his heart at Glasgow in 1820, was taken from him, then three of his children, then his beloved sister Lætitia. In 1860 he married again, a Miss Cecile

Spenser, many years younger than he. His daughter Katie has recorded in a poem called "*The Stepmother*," which deserves to survive, the pleasant surprise of the children on their first meeting with their stepmother. By this marriage he had one son. In 1869 he sustained a blow heavier than he could bear. His daughter Katie, a young lady beloved wherever she went for her good works, and a poetess of some ability, died on her return voyage from Madeira, whither she had gone for her health. Two years later Macready's eldest son died in Ceylon.

Under this dreadful load the old man began to sink. His had been an active retirement. At Sherborne he founded a literary institution, where he not only gave readings himself, but induced Dickens, Thackeray, and others to do the same. He also gave readings at other towns in the "Wessex" district, but would not be tempted, even by Dickens, to extend his operations to London.

After his removal to Cheltenham, the readings became less frequent and more private. To the last he could repeat most of his old characters, and continued to study them. When his grand voice had gone from him, he whispered to Lady Pollock that he had some new ideas for *Iago*. As he grew old he became venerable, and indeed beautiful to look at. The fleshy, fat look entirely left his face, he had a beautiful mouth, his fine eyes had grown softer in expression, and snow-white hair fell softly on his broad brow. He passed peacefully away on Sunday, 27th April, 1873.

His second wife survived him. His son by her, and a son and daughter by his first wife, were all that were left to him of his once numerous family, beside most of whom he was buried in Kensal Green.

In character Macready appears to have been a summary of everything he thoroughly disapproved of in others! He was what he himself would have described as a typical actor. He had all the little failings popularly supposed to belong to actors as a class, with none of the big ones. He was vain, touchy, tetchy, selfish, jealous, and an arrant snob. And he had few of the poor player's compensating virtues. There was no spirit of camaraderie, no open-handed Bohemian generosity about him.

It is true he had great friendships, but they were all with the great. He did not like the stage, and he said he did not like it. He was for ever fouling his own nest.

He had no self-control, and indulged in the detestable habit of slanging his company, using violent language, and generally showing off at rehearsal, especially if distinguished strangers were present, and they generally were!

He had strong dislikes and prejudices, and did not hesitate to exhibit them, having little mercy on those members of his company who were unfortunate enough to incur them. "Mother Shipton, by God!" said he to one of these unfortunates, who came on dressed for *Cardinal Campeius* in "*Henry VIII.*" He himself, as *Wolsey*, was not unlike the good lady, and being clean shaven, probably still more so than *Campeius!* And why should he not be? There would naturally be some resemblance between a wise-looking old gentleman and a wise-looking old lady in a big red hat!

There are two types of producers. One type drives its own ideas into the actors' heads by force of some sort, the other extracts their ideas and, by means of gentle encouragement and reason, fans the flame of their own individuality.

The former type is not really a producer at all, but an inducer; Macready belonged to this category, but, to do him justice, his bark was worse than his bite.

And that brings us to his very real and very solid virtues. He had little bite. He would not hit a man behind his back. The only time he did hit one he did it to his face, and the man richly deserved it. He was, on the whole, very just and upright, and no one ever complained of his business dealings except on the score of his over-anxiety to protect himself from risk. Domestically, his life was a model and moral one, though he was inclined to be tyrannical in the family circle. But none of his children afterwards disgraced themselves as tyrants' children usually do. He was physically very courageous and brave, as he proved on more than one occasion. Though there was no truth in the story, which always "rose" him, of his having rescued a child from a burning house, he was certainly capable of such an act. Time softened his nature, as well as his features, and he ended his days in the peace which is said to be the reward of the upright man. And an upright man he most certainly was, with a heart better than his head, and a nature better than his opinions. R.I.P.

As an actor, Macready was just on the border-line between greatness and genius. He was undoubtedly a great actor, with a wide range and immense capacity for taking pains, but he had not the inborn genius, the *natural* talent of Garrick or Kean. He did not act because he must act; he did not want to act, or at any rate thought he did not. Garrick and Kean never had any doubts on the subject. It was the object of their existence.

When Kean realized to the utmost "Othello's occupation's gone!" he had a stroke. Soon after Garrick gave up acting he died. They neither of them had enough to fall back upon. Kean had literally nothing. Garrick had not sufficient. It is a pity they had not the opportunity to read Lamb's "Superannuated Man." Garrick and Kean were masters, Macready was a student, a student in every sense of the word, with immense ability, and with genuine love for the drama, though not much for acting it. His heart was always in the study, sometimes in the stalls, but seldom on the stage. He knew good acting when he saw it, and loved it. He recognized Kean's wonderful abilities the moment he saw him, in the face of parental opposition. In after life, when he played with Kean during his melancholy final appearances, Macready said that there was still something ineffably grand about the wreck. Although his own performance of *Richard III* rivalled, and some competent critics even considered surpassed Kean's, there were moments in the great actor's work that he knew he could not touch, moments of real genius.

For this reason he would not attempt to play Kean's two greatest parts, *Sir Edward Mortimer* and *Sir Giles Overreach*, frankly admitting that he despaired of getting some of Kean's effects.

Like most brainy actors he failed in *Othello*. But he has a magnificent gallery of carefully-drawn, careful, convincing portraits: *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, *Iago*, *Henry IV*, *Wolsey*, *Virginius*, *Werner*, and many others, to his credit. Any one of these requires a very fine if not a great actor to do them justice. And Macready did them justice, emphatically so.

As a manager Macready was not so successful as an actor. He fell between two stools. His love for all that was best in art was too great to permit his making a straightforward bid for popularity and wealth ; at the same time, he was too fond of the good things in this world to renounce them in the cause of art. He was not public-spirited. His own welfare and the welfare of his family came next to his heart, in the place where he sometimes thought his art was. But once he and his family were safe, he was ready to do anything for his art. And he did do a good deal. But he was not of the stuff that real reformers are made.

Yet with his knowledge, his judgment, his real love for the drama and comprehension of a play as a whole, he should have made an admirable manager. But his silly little faults of character came in and spoilt it all, like the little foxes in the cornfield. He was ungenerous and small in his policy, and did not hesitate deliberately to forestall Kean's move on more than one occasion. Moreover, he "mountebanked" with his farewell performances.

But take him for all in all, actor, manager, and man, he richly deserves his place in any gathering of great actors.

CHARLES JOHN KEAN

1811–1868

IN writing this memoir of Charles Kean it is not proposed to spend much time traversing ground that has already been gone over in the life of his great father. Suffice to remind the reader that he was born at Waterford on or about 18th January, 1811. The exact date is unknown. As an infant he shared in his parents' terrible hardships and privations, until his father's great triumph at Drury Lane, 26th January, 1814. After that there came an easier time, when young Charles played with golden guineas as though they were marbles.

In June, 1824, he entered Eton as an oppidan, under the tutorship of Dr. Chapman, afterwards Bishop of Colombo, and the head mastership of Keate. His career at Eton bid fair to be more than ordinarily creditable, but it was untimely cut short by his father's fallen fortunes in 1827. It will be remembered that he was offered a cadetship in "John Company's" service by Mr. Calcraft, M.P., but refused to accept it unless his father settled an allowance of £400 a year upon his mother, from whom the father was separated. The elder Kean was unable to do this, and so father and son quarrelled, with the result, it will be further remembered, that young Charles determined to try the stage for a living, much to his father's disgust. The

CHARLES JOHN KEAN.

young man's name was an "Open Sesame" to the stage, and he had no difficulty at all in getting a three years' engagement from Stephen Price of Drury Lane, with a rising salary of from £10 to £12 a week. He made his first appearance, 1st October, 1827, as *Young Norval* in "*Douglas.*" He was so young, apparently not yet seventeen, that the Drury Lane directorate are said to have debated seriously as to whether he should not be announced as *Master* Kean.

After the performance he was unmercifully slated by the critics, who had not a word to say in his favour. He had, said they, a bad voice and a bad appearance, had inherited some of his father's bad habits and none of his good ones, and so on. Charles Kean was so deeply depressed by it all that he went to Price and begged to be released from his engagement. But this Price would not do, at any rate not yet. Nor was he the loser, for even the name of Kean was a great attraction, and young Charles was a financial success, if not an artistic one. He remained at Drury Lane until the close of the season 1827–8, playing, amongst other characters, *Achmet* in "*Barbarossa,*" *Frederick* in "*Lovers' Vows,*" and *Lothair* in "*Adelgitha.*" Not one of them advanced his reputation in the slightest, and the drawing power of his name, now that the first flush of curiosity was over, had ceased, and he played to half-empty and unappreciative houses. At the close of the season he went on a provincial tour, determined to work assiduously at, and master his art. Amongst other places he appeared in Dublin, where the warm-hearted audience gave a tremendous welcome to Charles, son of Edmund, their great favourite and a man after their own hearts. In

October, 1828, we find him in Glasgow. His father is near by, in his country cottage on the Isle of Bute, and Charles is determined, if possible, to be reconciled. An ambassador is sent to Bute, and the irate parent expresses the desire to see his erring son. The two are then reconciled, and on 1st October, 1828, the elder Kean is appearing with his son, and for his benefit, in Howard Payne's "*Brutus.*" Edmund played *Brutus* and Charles *Titus;* we have already heard how, when it came to the great scene between father and son, the whole audience were moved to tears and Edmund whispered, "We're doing the trick this time, Charles." On 20th October, 1828, Charles appeared for the first time as *Sir Edward Mortimer* in "*The Iron Chest*" with no very great success. He then returned to Drury Lane, making his first appearance, 15th October, as *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Miss C. Phillips. Miss Phillips was a great success, and Kean a great failure. He was consequently very much humiliated and distressed. Perhaps he received some consolation a few days later, on 26th October, 1828, when he met, for the first time, his future wife, Ellen Tree, and played with her in "*Lovers' Vows.*" But although Kean continued to remain a member of the company, his services were seldom in request. He therefore, as soon as he could, went on tour again, determined on further study and practice of his art. He joined his father in an Irish tour, and had the inestimable advantage of playing some of the best "seconds," including *Titus*, *Bassanio*, *Iago*, and *Macduff* to his father's "lead." After this, in October, 1829, he accepted an offer from Morris of the Haymarket to play six nights at that theatre for a salary of £20. He opened as *Reuben Glenroy*, played *Romeo* twice to Miss F. H.

Kelly's *Juliet*, then followed *Frederick* in "*Lovers' Vows*," and *Sir Edward Mortimer* in "*The Iron Chest*," in which character he first achieved something approaching a success. The papers actually praised him, and the play was repeated again for the last night of the season, 15th October, 1829. Kean was now beginning to be in demand for his own sake. Morris offered to re-engage him permanently to play heavy tragedy parts, but with real wisdom he declined the offer, determining to go in for another tour and further study. This ground, however, was not very happily chosen, for he accepted an engagement, with one Aubrey, to play in Amsterdam and The Hague for £20 a week. But Aubrey was a bogus manager and decamped with the treasury, leaving his company stranded in Holland. A benefit was got up for them, to which the King of Holland subscribed. Kean's share of the receipts was sufficient to enable him to return to England via Calais. He was now more sure of his ground as an actor, and had mastered much of the technique of his calling. He therefore determined to try his luck in America, and opened, in September, 1830, at the Park Theatre, New York, as *Richard III*. All the animosity against his father had long since died down, and New York only remembered his splendid achievements as an actor, consequently young Charles received an excellent reception, which gave him confidence and enabled him to establish quite an enviable reputation in such great parts as *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Sir Edward Mortimer*, *Sir Giles Overreach*.

He had not yet the hardihood to tackle *Othello* or *King Lear*, his father's other great successes.

The American tour was a long one and lasted for over two years, until the close of 1832. After a forty days' voyage across the Atlantic, Charles Kean arrived at Portsmouth 11th February, 1833.

He distinguished himself by tumbling into the water out of the boat that conveyed him from ship to shore, but so great was his anxiety to see his mother that, without stopping to change, he travelled all night to London in his wet clothes, and was none the worse for his act of filial devotion. He had not been in London long before he received a good offer of £30 a week from Laporte, the manager of Covent Garden. This he accepted, with the stipulation that he should make his reappearance as *Sir Edward Mortimer*. The directors were strongly opposed to this, and their objections were justified by the coolness of Kean's reception in the character. People and press alike condemned him as they had done on his first appearance. The house and the coffers were alike half empty. To give the business a fillip, all that was left of Edmund Kean was engaged to play *Shylock*. This he did, but the painful exhibition was more calculated to repel than attract. Then Laporte bethought himself that "*Othello*," with father and son as *Othello* and *Iago* respectively, would be a great draw. *Desdemona* was to be Ellen Tree. The performance, if performance it could be called, took place 25th March, 1833. The tragic sequel has already been related in the memoir of Edmund Kean. The one pleasant recollection that Charles could have had of this terrible night was his father's praise of his own performance. "Charlie is playing very well to-night," said Kean, "very well indeed! I suppose that is because he is acting with me."

It was the last time that father and son played together, and the only time they did so in London.

As will be remembered, the elder Kean lingered on until 15th May, 1833, when he died, Charles being constantly at his bedside, and playing the while at Covent Garden. Edmund Kean's affairs were in such a sad state at his death that all his property had to be sold for his creditors, and Charles was not then in a position to "buy in" any of the interesting relics. But he was in a position to keep his mother, and declined the offer of Bunn of Drury Lane to give her a benefit. These incidents were somewhat adversely commented on at the time, and many considered that Charles should have saved what he could from the wreck of his father's effects and allowed his mother her benefit, but she probably did not wish it, and Charles rightly respected the wishes of a good mother more than the memory of a bad father.

It was further hinted by Messrs. Bunn and Dunn, of Drury Lane, that they would be glad to offer Charles Kean an engagement at £15 a week, to which he replied that he did not intend to set foot on a London stage again until he could command his own terms of £50 a night. "Then," said they, "you must bid a long farewell to London, for the days of such salaries are gone for ever."

Yet within six years Bunn was paying, and glad to pay him, that same salary for a season of twenty nights, afterwards extended to close upon forty!

In October, 1833, Kean played a short season in Dublin, in which he added *Jaffier*, *Othello*, and *Macbeth* to his other rôles.

He was as warmly welcomed as he had been on his previous visits, and it was becoming clear that if he never did anything in London he was always sure of fame and fortune in the provinces.

After that he went with an English company to Hamburg. The heroine of the company was Ellen Tree, and the budding romance suffered no diminution by the little trip. The company opened at Hamburg very successfully, but their success was their undoing. The native establishments complained that the foreign intruders were depriving them of their own custom, and the English actors got notice to quit.

On his return to England, Charles Kean again went on tour, and rapidly established a firm hold in all the leading provincial theatres—in fact, his tours amounted to a sort of triumphal progress. He was as popular off the stage as he was on, and was made much of by the most distinguished and learned element in every town he visited. In the summer of 1836 he visited his native town of Waterford, where a public banquet was given in his honour, and he was voted a piece of plate, afterwards presented to him in London by a deputation from the city of Waterford.

He continued touring and winning more golden opinions until the end of 1837. In July of that year he received an invitation from Macready to become a member of his company at Covent Garden. The letter was a very complimentary one to Kean, but contained a somewhat ungracious and Macreadian hint that if he did not elect to join Macready he might at least refrain from appearing anywhere else in the metropolis. To this Kean replied that if he did appear in London at all, he was under some sort of contract to Bunn of Drury Lane. He also tactfully pointed out to Macready the unfairness of the suggested hint, to which letter Macready wrote a civil reply and a somewhat lame explanation of the meaning of his letter. The correspondence then concluded. Kean now began seriously to contemplate another London venture. He had climbed to the highest pinnacle of fame and success in the provinces, and wished to seal his position with London approval. He accordingly closed with an offer from Mr. Bunn to play twenty nights at a salary of £50 a night. With the courage born of conviction and all the hard work he had gone through, he determined to open with *Hamlet*, and did so on 8th January, 1838.

His success and triumph were only surpassed by that of his father twenty-four years previously. The name of Kean was again on everybody's lips, and all London hastened to do him honour. His reading of *Hamlet* was founded on intense study and close reasoning, and appears to have struck a very happy medium between the romanticism of his father and the classicalism of Young. Probably Charles Kean's reading was nearer the true one, for surely *Hamlet* himself is a very pronounced mixture of reason and romance. Kean's voice too had much improved, he had lost the exaggerated reproductions of his father's tricks and mannerisms, and there only remained a very pleasing resemblance which served to keep playgoers reminded of the old favourite whilst applauding the new. The press, albeit somewhat grudgingly in some instances, found themselves forced to admit the completeness of his success. He played *Hamlet* twenty-three times, and his season was prolonged to forty-three nights. On 5th February he appeared as *Richard III.* The success of this equalled his *Hamlet.* The newspapers said that the mantle of his father had fallen gracefully on his shoulders, and Queen Victoria, who was present at the performance and aged nineteen, expressed her approval! His performance of *Richard III* displayed the same thoughtful care as his *Hamlet*, although of course it did not compare so well with his father's performance. Nor did his *Sir Giles Overreach*, also played this season, a very tame business compared to Edmund's terrible representation. But on the whole the season was eminently successful, and the young man's position in London assured.

On 30th March a complimentary dinner was given to him by his friends and admirers, in the saloon of the theatre, and he was presented with a silver loving-cup. He returned thanks in a brief, graceful, and unassuming speech, which greatly pleased his hearers, and proved that in this respect, at any rate, he rose superior to his father.

After this season he went for a short tour in the north, returning to Drury Lane, where, on the 16th May, he appeared for the first time as *Othello*. In this he was treading very sacred ground. It was his father's greatest Shakespearean performance. On the whole, he came through the "trial by comparison" very creditably, although a portion of the audience were antagonistic. Indeed, from now onwards, there generally seems to have been a disapproving "clique" in the theatre whenever he played. Kean terminated this engagement early in June with a performance, for his own benefit, of "*The Iron Chest*," in which he played *Sir Edward Mortimer*, always a favourite part with himself, if not with his audiences. He then went on tour again, and fortune continued to dog his footsteps. On returning to London he played a season at the Haymarket under Webster. The contract was for twelve nights at £50 a night, and a benefit, but it was extended, owing to Kean's success, to nearly thrice that number. As before, "*Hamlet*" continued the greatest attraction, and was played ten nights out of the twenty-two.

After this season Kean again visited America, with rather disastrous results, not with regard to his acting or his drawing power, but from extraneous causes. The tour was a chapter of accidents. The National Theatre in New York, in which he opened, was burnt down under somewhat suspicious circumstances, a rival theatrical manager being suspected of incendiarism. Soon after Kean's first appearance he was attacked by a severe throat trouble, and had to stop acting for some days. In Boston he had a very narrow escape, a counterweight falling from the flies and instantly killing an unfortunate super who was standing on the spot occupied by Kean a moment before. After this his throat again became bad, and he was forced to take a holiday, and went on a trip to the West Indies.

He returned to London in June, 1840, and renewed his engagement at the Haymarket, this time for thirty nights. He added *Macbeth* to his old répertoire, supported by Mrs. Warner as *Lady Macbeth*. The performance was voted a success, and Kean's engagement was again extended. He also played *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Miss Ellen Tree, both on and off the stage, for on 29th January, 1842, the couple were married at St. Thomas's Church, Dublin, appearing together the same evening in "*The Honeymoon*." But the marriage was not made public, for private reasons, until the following month at Glasgow. There followed another season of over fifty nights at the Haymarket, when husband and wife played together in many plays, including "*As You Like It*," "*The Lady of Lyons*," and a new play by Sheridan Knowles called "*The Rose of Aragon*." It has not survived, but is interesting as being the outcome of some long-drawn-out negotiations between Kean and Knowles. The Haymarket season concluded, Charles Kean, now bereft of the services of his wife, shortly to be confined of their one and only child, a daughter, migrated to Drury Lane, where Bunn gave him his old terms of £50. A production of "*Richard III*" on an unprecedented scale of splendour was the feature of the season, and foreshadowed Kean's later policy at the Princess's Theatre.

In 1845 Mr. and Mrs. Kean visited America, and broke all records with their success. The features of the tour were the production of a new play by Lovell called "*The Wife's Secret.*" Kean had commissioned him to write this, paying him £400 before he put pen to paper, and the play's success fully justified the investment. Other remarkable features of the tour were the production, on a scale of magnificence quite new to the States, of "*King John*" and "*Richard III.*"

They left America in the summer of 1847, gave the then decaying Dublin season a fillip by appearing in "*The Jealous Wife*" and "*The Wonder,*" toured the provinces, and reopened in London at the Haymarket in January, 1848.

Acting upon the advice of friends who had carefully studied the theatrical firmament during their absence, they opened with "*The Wife's Secret,*" Kean playing *Sir Walter Amyot* and his wife *Lady Eveline.*

At Christmas, 1849, Kean was selected to direct the Windsor Theatricals, and continued to do so annually for a number of years. This selection was quite unsolicited on his part, and constituted an honour and privilege which he greatly appreciated. The Keans were now a permanent institution at the Haymarket Theatre, having abandoned touring for the nonce, partly because Kean desired to be within easy reach of his mother, whose troubled life was now fast ebbing to a close. She died on 30th March, 1849, at Reydell, near Horndean, Hants.

Charles had purchased a small house for her in 1844, and there she eked out the remainder of her days in peace, cheered by the constant visits of her really devoted son and daughter-in-law. She was buried in the little churchyard of Catherington, where Charles erected a monument to her memory, though not such an imperishable one as her wayward husband had.

On 20th June, 1849, Westland Marston's "*Strathmore*" was produced at the Haymarket. It was one of this charming and poetic writer's best efforts, and gained great popularity in the Kean répertoire. But the season was too far advanced and the heat too intense for it to have a really fair chance.

Mr. and Mrs. Kean concluded their Haymarket season in March, 1850, when they appeared respectively as *Benedick* and *Beatrice* in "*Much Ado About Nothing*" for their benefit, and the occasion was honoured by the presence of Queen Victoria.

An opportunity then presented itself, which Kean was not slow to take, of entering management on his own account. The Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street was in the market, and in partnership with Robert Keeley he took a lease of it for two years. The lease was signed in August, 1850, and on 28th September they opened with "*Twelfth Night.*" The season lasted without interruption until 17th October, 1851. The following Shakespeare plays were produced: "*Twelfth Night*," forty times; "*Henry IV, Part I*," twenty-two; "*Hamlet*," fourteen; "*Merchant of Venice*," twelve; and "*As You Like It*," four. In addition

"*The Wife's Secret,*" "*The Gamester,*" "*The Honeymoon,*" "*The Stranger,*" amongst old plays, and "*The Templar*" and "*The Duke's Wager,*" by A. R. Slous. The latter an adaptation from the French "*Mademoiselle de Belle Isle,*" another adaptation of which, by Sydney Grundy, has been produced in our own time at His Majesty's Theatre under the title of "*The Silver Key,*" by Sir Herbert Tree. Another adaptation from the French was John Oxenford's "*Pauline,*" which made a very popular melodrama. It required a good deal of adapting to suit the English taste, and the adaptation was very skilfully done. "*Love in a Maze,*" by Dion Boucicault, was also produced, a pantomime and various farces, of which "*Betsey Baker*" still survives. The season closed, as it opened, with "*Twelfth Night.*" Considering the formidable counter-attraction of the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, it yielded the handsome profit of £7000.

Keeley now retired from partnership, and Kean became the sole manager and lessee of the Princess's. He reopened, 22nd November, 1851, with "*The Merry Wives of Windsor,*" playing *Ford* to the *Falstaff* of Bartley. Mrs. Kean and Mrs. Keeley played Mesdames *Ford* and *Page* respectively. But it was not until 9th February, 1852, that Kean really commenced his future policy by the production of "*King John,*" with the careful historical and lavish scenic display for which his management afterwards became famous. His rendering of the title-rôle was popular, as was Mrs. Kean's *Lady Constance; Prince Arthur* was played by Miss Kate Terry, then a child of ten. The production was, as already hinted, the keynote of Kean's future policy at the theatre. Macready had retired the year before, and with the possible exception of Phelps, whose famous management of the Sadler's Wells Theatre was now in full swing, Kean was monarch of the theatrical world in London.

"*King John*" was succeeded on 24th February by Boucicault's famous adaptation of "*The Corsican Brothers*." This was the first production of the great French melodrama in English, and was enormously successful, running into sixty-six performances, and setting the fashion to most of the other theatres in the metropolis, which put up different versions of their own. Kean played *Louis* and *Fabian dei Franchi* very successfully, and the wonderful *Ghost* had not a small share in the drawing power of the piece. Lovell's "*Trial of Love*" was presented on 7th June, but was not so successful as the same author's "*Wife's Secret*," although following very much the same lines. It ran for twenty-three nights. Boucicault's "*Vampire*," another melodrama founded on the French, was produced without much success. The season closed on July 14th. It was neither so long nor so remunerative as its predecessor.

The third season began 18th September, 1852, with Boucicault's "*Prima Donna*," yet another adaptation. It ran thirty-four nights and was succeeded by "*Mont St. Michel*," yet another romantic melodrama from a French source.

The third and one of the most important novelties was Westland Marston's "*Anne Blake*." Although it was played for forty-two nights, it was not a financial success. Douglas Jerrold's "*St. Cupid; or Dorothy's Fortune*," after a trial run at no less a place than Windsor Castle, was produced on 22nd January, 1853, and was a failure, owing to too much dialogue and too little plot.

"*Macbeth*," the great production of the season, was produced 14th February, 1853. On this occasion Kean issued the first of his famous "Fly-Leaves" (addendas to the programme) explaining his method and his policy.

Kean as *Macbeth* and Mrs. Kean as his lady were very popular. In fact, the whole production, especially the ghost of *Banquo*, was immensely so, and ran for twenty weeks, being played three times a week. But Kean's methods already began to find their detractors, and his production of Byron's "*Sardanapalus*" on 13th June, upon which tremendous care and archæological research were bestowed, was much criticized and burlesqued. Douglas Jerrold is said to have been the prime instigator of the antagonistic movement. He had quarrelled with Kean over the delayed production of a play of his called "*The Heart of Gold.*"

After inspecting the correspondence that passed between them one is almost forced to the conclusion that Jerrold deliberately desired to pick a quarrel with Kean. "*Richard III*" was revived on 20th February, 1854. For once in a way Kean did not revert to the original text of Shakespeare, but played Colley Cibber's version, partly because, as he explained in his "Fly-Leaf," he really considered it a better version for acting purposes, and partly because he felt he had not the moral courage to tamper with the version sacred to the memories of Garrick, Cooke, Kemble, and his own father. The revival was staged with great care and splendour, but was not a success, only running for nineteen nights. Some attributed the failure to the fact that Mrs. Kean was ill and unable to act, others, Kean amongst them, to the desire he himself had fostered for Shakespeare pure and undefiled.

On 19th April "*Faust and Marguerite*" was produced, and described as a "magical drama, adapted from the French." In this Kean made a real hit as *Mephistopheles*. Mrs. Kean was still away ill; Shakespeare had to be shelved for the time being, and Kean fell back upon another French melodrama, "*The Courier of Lyons*," since famous all the world over as "*The Lyons Mail*." Kean made another great success by doubling the parts of *Lesurques* and *Dubosc*, and his detractors were forced to admit that he was, at any rate, a great actor of melodrama. "*The Courier of Lyons*," which was enormously successful, brought the season to a close. Kean reopened with it the next season, and its success was renewed. In October Douglas Jerrold's "*Heart of Gold*"—the play that had been the cause of the quarrel—was produced, but was a failure. Jerrold attributed the failure to the fact that Kean did not play in it, although he was always the first and loudest to declare that Kean could not act. If he was not a great actor he was soon to prove he was a very good one, for, on 13th January, 1855, he appeared in his greatest part of *Louis XI*. The play was adapted by Boucicault from the French of Casimir de la Vigne. Like Kean's other success, "*The Courier of Lyons*," it has since become famous all over the world through the genius of Sir Henry Irving, which has somewhat smothered the Kean tradition. But there is no doubt at all that Kean was admirable in the character, and he is said by this masterly performance to have silenced for ever the antagonistic clique which had been in the habit of frequenting any theatre at which he appeared.

"*Louis XI*" was shortly followed by another great success, the grand revival, on 16th May, 1855, of "*King*

Henry VIII" on a sumptuous scale of splendour hitherto undreamt of, even in connection with that popular pageant play. In the rôle of *Cardinal Wolsey*, Kean found a part after his own heart, and Mrs. Kean reappeared on the stage for the first time after her long and trying illness. *Queen Katherine* was as well suited to her abilities as *Wolsey* was to her husband's. She had a magnificent reception on her first entrance, and was attended by some of the principal members of her company as ladies-in-waiting. These ladies had voluntarily offered their services in this humble capacity out of compliment to Mrs. Kean. This production marked the climax of Kean's successful management. It ran for upwards of a hundred nights, thus eclipsing all previous records for a Shakespeare play. It is a curious fact that in spite of the adverse criticisms and accusations of dullness levelled at the play, "*Henry VIII*" has so often proved a great popular success. Macready, Phelps, Kean, Sir Henry Irving, and Sir Herbert Tree, all in turn found it one of the most popular productions of their répertoire. It is surely not nearly such a bad play as many seem to think. It is a real work of art, in which there is construction, form, and consistency. Whoever did it, Fletcher, Shakespeare, or both, the unerring hand of a great dramatist is seen in the selection of the main "motif," the revelation, as it came about in this reign, of the temporality of Rome's power. Henry seems to have seen clearly that church and state, in his day, was a distinction without much difference. The pope and his cardinals had no power other than he had got. He did not object to a king and a pope, but he was not going to have two kings. Having seen through Rome he was going to play them at their own game, the game of politics, which would have been a good title for the play. By the way, surely it ought to be announced as being by Shakespeare and Fletcher.

Kean made some notable improvements on previous productions. He restored the fine scene in the third act, where the queen is visited by the two cardinals, at Windsor, to try and inveigle her to consent to a divorce. John Kemble had omitted this scene in his presentation.

Can he have managed to conceal its existence from Mrs. Siddons? One cannot believe that she would knowingly lose such an opportunity to display regal scorn! Kean, who had up till now spent about £6000 in fees and royalties to new and contemporary authors, seldom justifying the outlay, determined that Shakespeare should henceforward be the mainstay of his theatre. The next great production was "*A Winter's Tale*," produced 28th April, 1856. Kean played *Leontes*, Mrs. Kean *Hermione*. The whole production equalled "*Henry VIII*" in splendour and in success, for it ran a hundred and two nights. On the closing night of the season, Kean announced a revival of Sheridan's "*Pizarro*" for the next season. His lease of the Princess's had expired the previous year, but emboldened by success he had taken up his option of extending it for another four years.

On Monday, 7th September, 1856, he began his seventh season with the promised revival of Sheridan and Kotzebue's "*Pizarro*," a play that had been very successful with preceding generations. Kean played *Rolla*, Mrs. Kean *Elvira*, and the production was very successful and still drawing good houses when it was withdrawn to make way for "*A Midsummer*

Night's Dream," produced 15th October, 1856. In this production neither Kean nor his wife had a part, but *Puck* was played by no less a person than Miss Ellen Terry, then eight years old.

The beauty of the production may be realized when it is said that the most was made of the play's exquisite opportunities. During this and the following season it was played a hundred and fifty times.

"*Richard II*" was produced 12th March, 1857. Various garbled versions by Nahum Tate, Colley Cibber and others, had been played at different times, but Kean eschewed all of them and reverted to the original text. As a scenic production it was a success and filled the bill for three months, but the acting was scarcely inspired. Kean's *Richard II* was a colourless performance. But he fell in good company, and the stage yet awaits a convincing representation of this complex, but not uncommon, type of character.

An exciting incident happened one night during the performance of "*Richard II*." The drop-curtains caught fire, and a panic might have taken place but for Mrs. Kean's presence of mind in coming forward and assuring the audience there was no danger. For this act of courage she was afterwards presented by the stage-hands at the theatre with an illuminated address.

"*Richard II*" was followed by the "*Tempest*," produced on the usual scale of splendour on 1st July, 1857, Kean playing *Prospero*. Kean did not confine his attention to the scenery alone, but made some welcome departures from custom, amongst which was giving the play a purely imaginary locality which helped to heighten the effect and plant the play in its right place, the wonderful "panorama" of Shakespeare's exquisitely sensitive mind. At the close of this season the theatre was shut for decorations and repairs, and Mr. and Mrs. Kean took a well-earned holiday on the continent, visiting, amongst other places, Venice, where Kean gathered some materials for a forthcoming revival. Mrs. Kean did the same at Rome, as we shall see.

In the preceding summer Kean had, much to his delight, been elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquarians, and on his return to town he formally enrolled himself and "took his seat" as a member.

He commenced the new season with a revival of "*King Henry VIII*," and a new robe as *Cardinal Wolsey*. The history of this robe is interesting. The fact that his dress was not quite historically accurate had caused Kean much distress, nor could he find exactly what he wanted. But Mrs. Kean was determined to get it for him, and when they visited Rome actually managed by much bribery and corruption to penetrate the mysteries of the Vatican. She was led by hidden ways and hidden means, beckoning fingers and itching palms, to a room where, on a table, lay a specimen of the genuine article! She lost no time in taking measurements and patterns, and Charles Kean reappeared in a robe perfect in every detail. But his wife never dared to tell him the full story of how it was come by!

Other revivals followed "*Henry VIII*," and then took place at Her Majesty's Theatre the series of gala performances in honour of the marriage of the Princess Royal. For some reason or other Kean's name did not appear amongst those taking part in the performances, and the fact was much commented on in the press and elsewhere. The exact reason for the omission has never transpired, but Kean seems to have thought that the performances were too much of a private speculation and enterprise, and to have withdrawn the light of his countenance from them!

But he was undoubtedly, and not unjustifiably, hurt at receiving no commands or intimation from high quarters that his services would be required in some capacity on this occasion, after the trouble he had taken for so many years, and the unrecouped money he had spent on the Windsor Theatricals. His idea had been that all theatres should throw open their doors free to the public on the gala night, and thus avert any suspicion of speculation. But other theatres did not agree with him. On the night of the gala performance he himself revived "*Hamlet*" to a packed house, who were not slow to express publicly their feelings on the matter. Kean was forced to make a speech, and made an extremely good and tactful one, in which he only alluded to his audience's kindness in endorsing the public opinion of his merits.

"*King Lear*" was the next Shakespearean revival. It was produced 17th April, 1858, but was not a great success. Kean could scarcely rise to such heights as *Lear*. But the production had its points in the usual faithfulness to the original text. The *Fool*, a character always omitted by Garrick, Henderson, Cooke, and Edmund Kean, had been restored to its rightful and essential place in the drama by Macready, and was played in Charles Kean's production, as in Macready's, by a lady, Miss Poole.

On 12th June, 1858, "*The Merchant of Venice*," a play inseparably associated with his father, was produced. The setting was a gem of beauty. The Venice scenes were painted from sketches done on the spot, and Kean took the greatest pains, very rightly, to accentuate the fact that "*The Merchant*" is the love-story of *Portia* and *Bassanio.* The last scene in the moonlit garden at Belmont was exquisite and, after the horrors of the trial scene, like a gentle awakening from a nightmare. Kean's portrayal of *Shylock* foreshadowed in its human touches the magnificent reading which was later to be given by Sir Henry Irving. Mrs. Kean's *Portia*, too, was a forerunner of Ellen Terry's delightful performance. The *Prince of Morocco* and the *Prince of Arragon* casket scenes, hitherto always omitted, were restored. Nowadays it is usually the custom to omit one of them, but it seems a pity ever to lose one word of this exquisite play, in which powerful drama, tender poetry, and gentle philosophy are "blended together in one harmonious whole." "*The Merchant of Venice*" is one of the most kaleidoscopic plays ever written. In it Shakespeare successfully reaches a point where he breaks every so-called rule of dramatic art and construction with impunity and advantage. It abounds in different plots and interests, each perhaps sufficient to make a play in itself. *Antonio* and *Shylock*, and *Antonio* by himself, *Jessica* and *Lorenzo*, *Portia* and *Bassanio* are each a play in little. Yet there is no conflict or confusing of interest. The whole is homogeneous.

On the 21st July, 1858, Kean took the chair at a meeting at the Princess's Theatre, with the object of founding a home for aged and decayed actors, to be called the Dramatic College. A certain Mr. Henry Dodd had presented some land in Berkshire. Various other people had made substantial gifts of money and property. Queen Victoria eventually became patroness and sent £100. Then clouds began to gather. Mr. Dodd so surrounded his gift with conditions and restrictions that it was repudiated, and the offer from the London Necropolis Company of some land at Woking was accepted.

An urn for the reception of the ashes of the scheme would have been more useful, for the whole thing was a disastrous fiasco, and no wonder, for it reckoned entirely without the actor's temperament.

However decayed, an actor is always a Bohemian of the Bohemians. That is generally why he is decayed! He cannot and will not live in the country. He would sooner starve amid his beloved theatres. To bury him alive in the Woking Necropolis was, to say the least of it, lacking in humour. If such a scheme is ever started again, let us hope the promoters will be wiser in their generation and establish their new Dramatic College somewhere within an old man's totter of the Strand, Maiden Lane, Bedford Street, and what is generally known as the Mummer's Mile!

At the close of this season Kean announced that the next would be his last in management. In spite of the outward appearance of success the season had been a disastrous one, owing partly to the depressed American market, the royal wedding festivities, as well as to the internal causes of expense of production, and the utter inadequacy of the little Princess's Theatre to hold profitable returns for the weekly outlay. During it Kean had lost £4000. "*Henry V*" was his last Shakespearean revival. His management of the Princess's terminated on 29th August, 1859. He made a long speech on the occasion, explaining and defending his policy as a manager. Previously to this, on 20th July, 1859, a committee of old Etonians organized a large public banquet in his honour at St. James's Hall. The Duke of Newcastle presided in the absence of the Earl of Carlisle. After the loyal toasts there were only three others drunk, Mr. Charles Kean and Mrs. Kean (who received a great ovation on making her appearance in the ladies' gallery), and "*Floreat Etona!*" This was the first of many such complimentary events, chief of which was a meeting, in March, 1862, with Mr. Gladstone in the chair, when Kean was presented with a piece of plate worth two thousand guineas.

Kean had now arrived at the zenith of his career, and the climax of the work that he did for the stage.

The remainder of his life was passed mainly in touring abroad and at home. Although he fulfilled engagements at Drury Lane in 1861 and 1862, he created no new characters of importance. In March, 1862, he took his farewell of Drury Lane, like Garrick before him, as *Don Felix* in "*The Wonder.*" Mrs. Kean played *Violante.* After that the two went on a world-tour together, playing in Australia, San Francisco, Vancouver Island, on the Isthmus of Panama, and in Jamaica. At places where it was impossible to produce plays they gave dramatic recitals. From April, 1865, to April, 1866, they gave a series of farewell performances in New York City. The following May they were back in England, performing in Liverpool, and subsequently back in their old home at the Princess's. Then they went on tour again, and Charles Kean's health began to show signs of breaking up. Though he did not know it at the time, he made his final appearance on any stage at Liverpool, in the character of *Louis XI*, on 28th May, 1867. He now continued desperately ill of heart disease until the following 22nd January, 1868, when he died at his home in Queensborough Terrace, Chelsea.

He was buried beside his mother at Catherington, in Hampshire. After his death Mrs. Kean retired from the stage and lived in respected retirement until 20th August, 1880, when she died and was buried with her husband.

Though not by any means a great actor, Charles Kean by his indomitable pluck, studiousness and perseverance won for himself a commanding position on the stage of his day.

He began with no real advantage. The undistinguished son of a distinguished father, his easily acquired opportunities merely displayed his inability to grasp them. A lost opportunity is worse than none. The lost ground has to be recovered ere headway can be made. When Kean did recover the lost ground, he forged ahead in the way he knew he could do best.

He could restore the text of Shakespeare to the stage as nearly as possible in its original form. That he did. He could reproduce, with the help of his own knowledge and the skill of his scene-painters and costumiers, the historical panorama of Shakespeare's mind. That he did. But he could not, and with the memory of his wonderful father continually with him must have known that he could not, reproduce or reveal the dramatic heart of Shakespeare. His critics accused him of deliberately sacrificing Shakespeare to scenery, and burying the drama beneath the decoration. That was not strictly true. The drama was never there, as far as Kean was concerned. *He did what he could.* If more people did what they could and worried themselves less about what they ought, the drama would get along more quickly. Undoubtedly the right way to produce Shakespeare is to leave as much as possible to the imagination, to pique and waken the imagination, to set it working. But supposing one is unable, has not the necessary command of one's art to do that, or the subject has no imagination to be awakened, may one not take some external means to convey the impression, as one does when teaching a child numbers? I am not supporting Kean's methods from the standpoint of the right or the wrong way, but from his way. It was the best he could do according to his lights. If they were feeble lights, as indeed they were, then it were better to give him stronger ones, than to blow out those he had got and leave him and his vast audiences in darkness.

"More light!" is a legitimate cry, but "Put out that light, it's a bad one" is feeble, coming from where there is nothing better. Those who know how to produce Shakespeare the right way will produce him the right way, and no amount of darkness will put out their light. Purely destructive criticism is, as a rule, the jealousy that, having nothing, seeks to rob others of the little they have, or think they have. The real image-breaker is the image-maker. He who exchanges new lamps for old.

To push the argument of the no-scenery agitation to extremes, Shakespeare should never be acted at all, but only read, when everything is left to the imagination! The finest work of art can only exist in the mind of the artist. No artist succeeds in completely externalizing his idea. Shakespeare would doubtless have been amused, and possibly interested, but I do not believe he would have been shocked or annoyed at Charles Kean's productions, any more than Michael Angelo would be at a child's attempt to reproduce the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. He would probably be the first to see and applaud the good in it.

"Live and let live" is the genuine constructor and artist's motto. A man who is doing has little time to be undoing. If we can only have the "suits and trappings" of Shakespeare, let us by all means have them. To suppose for an instant that real drama can be crushed by the scenery, if the ability to reveal it is there, is surely a mistake. If Kean's scenery had been knocked down there would have been nothing left. His accusers charged him with hiding the drama beneath it.

As a melodramatic actor Kean was on surer ground. Melodrama, which is really primitive drama, was well within his grasp, and his "*Lyons Mail*," "*Corsican Brothers*," and "*Louis XI*" were unapproached until Sir Henry Irving came along with his overwhelming personality and annexed them.

In character, as well as appearance, Charles Kean was small. He was a good son to his mother and a model husband to his wife, in the sense that a model is "a small specimen of the real article." He inherited his father's virtues and vices on a small scale. He was a good actor, in a small way, full of absurd little vanities and petty touchinesses and tetchinesses. It was really a mercy that the great Edmund was spared the sight of some of his son's virtues!

There was little really small about Edmund, but everything was small about Charles, except his heart, which was large and stout.

He and his wife were a quaint couple to look at, and caused great amusement on their walks abroad. Charles wore long hair which only accentuated the insignificance of his queer little face. Mrs. Kean was always most respectably dressed, with a poke-bonnet and enormous hoops, which, when they became rebellious, as they sometimes did, revealed chaste white stockings and flat-heeled shoes.

On one occasion the hoop caught in some scenery. "Charles, Charles," said Mrs. Kean, "I am caught. Can't you see?" "I can, my dear," said Charles, dancing about between her and the audience, "and I am trying to prevent them from doing so!" But this was desperation, not humour! Neither he nor his wife had much of that. On one occasion a member of their company came on the stage incorrectly dressed. It was not altogether his fault. Part of his wardrobe had been mislaid. Afterwards he went to the Keans' dressing-room to apologize. The door was opened by Mrs. Kean. "What is it you want, sir?" The actor told his story. The lady retired for a moment, then reappeared. "Mr. Kean says he will forgive you this time, sir, but"—and she pointed solemnly upwards—"will you be forgiven *there?*"

But with all his queer little vanities and tetcheries, Charles Kean fought and won a splendid fight and was a force on the stage of his time, and a force that is still felt.

PRODIGY

WILLIAM HENRY WEST BETTY

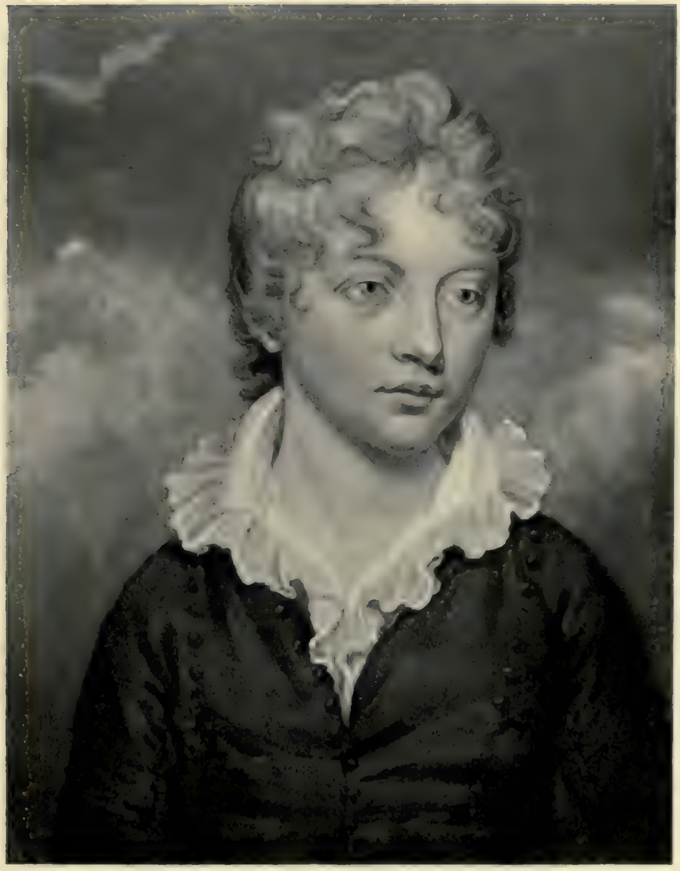
1791–1874

WILLIAM HENRY WEST BETTY, better known as Master Betty or The Young Roscius, a real "Infant Phenomenon," was born at St. Chad's, Shrewsbury, on 13th September, 1791. His father was the son of a successful Irish physician, who had made his pile at Lisburn, County Antrim. His mother was a Miss Staunton of Shropshire, a woman of quite exceptional accomplishments, who early began to educate her son in reading, speaking, and reciting poetry. His father was a very fine fencer, and Master Betty had the advantage of a splendid early training in that art.

Whether his talents were really as great as they were sometimes supposed to be, may be doubtful, but he certainly began his phenomenal career with some useful and graceful accomplishments.

Soon after he was born his father and mother moved to Ballinahinch, County Down.

There his father started a farm and linen factory, and there his son showed the first signs of precocity. Amongst the things his mother taught him to recite were *Wolsey's* downfall speech from "*Henry VIII*," and *Young Norval's* introductory speech from "*Douglas*." He learnt them in an incredibly short space of time,



WILLIAM HENRY WEST BETTY.
("Master Betty.")

and his father was more than impressed with his delivery of them.

Perhaps it was this that induced him to take his son to the theatre in Belfast to see the great Mrs. Siddons. The play was "*Pizarro.*" Mrs. Siddons played *Elvira*, and young Betty tasted for the first time the intoxicating wine of the footlights. And he became drunk, drunk with the glamour of the theatre and the wonder of the matchless Mrs. Siddons.

On his return home he said that he would die if he were not permitted to go on the stage. His father and mother had had no such ideas for him, but they saw that he was in deadly earnest, and very likely would die if not allowed his way. So he was taken to see Mr. Atkins, manager of the theatre at Belfast, to whom he repeated some of *Elvira's* speeches. Atkins was very much struck by the boy's "wild, untutored genius," and sent for Mr. Hough, his prompter, in whose judgment he believed, to come and hear. Hough at once pronounced the boy to have genuine abilities, and accepted the offer to go and stay a short time at Ballinahinch and train him. His teacher was astounded at the rapidity and readiness with which he grasped and portrayed what was told him.

His mind received impressions like a highly sensitive photographic plate, his voice recorded sounds and tones it heard with far more accuracy than the most perfect phonograph.

In fact, his was, at that time, the mimetic faculty developed to the highest point of perfection.

For two years he remained at home carefully studying the art of acting, and especially paying attention to the part of *Osman* in "*Zara*," a version by Hill of Voltaire's "*Zaire.*" In this part he made his first appearance as "a young gentleman only eleven years of age." The house was packed with a curious and afterwards delighted crowd. They were astounded at what they saw and heard. This was no ordinary precocious infant, but a young boy who acted, spoke and moved like a man, and a finished actor. He had a beautiful voice and a beautiful presence, and trod the stage with the ease and grace of a Garrick. The following day his name was on everybody's lips, the sole topic of conversation in the town. Five days later he appeared as *Young Norval* in "*Douglas*," a part better suited to his age and appearance than *Osman*, but in some ways more difficult to play. Betty again triumphed. There had been some scoffers, but they were completely silenced. He had been engaged for four nights, and *Osman* and *Norval* were followed by *Rollo* and *Romeo.* Every one was curious to see his *Romeo*, for it was felt that it must assuredly be impossible for the boy to portray a passion which he could not yet have experienced. But he did, and portrayed it very much more convincingly than many a man who has more than once been in the condition! Moreover, he probably struck the essential note of fresh boyish impulse as well, if not better, than any one else had ever done. Betty's parents now decided to strike while the iron was hot—more was the pity!—and accepted an engagement for the boy to appear in Dublin, at the Crow Street Theatre, for nine performances. He made his first appearance as *Young Norval* on 28th November, 1803, and delighted a packed and fashionable house. He was now announced as the "Infant Roscius" of twelve years old! His performance of *Young Norval* was so successful that he repeated it the following night, and subsequently added to his répertoire *Frederick* in Mrs. Inchbald's "*Lovers' Vows*," *Tancred* in Thomson's "*Tancred and Sigismunda*," *Prince Arthur* in "*King John*," the sort of part to which he should, for the sake of the future, have been confined. He must have been an ideal *Arthur*.

To cap all he played *Hamlet!* It is scarcely conceivable, or can only be conceived of as something terrible! But his *Hamlet* undoubtedly had many beauties. A mind that had learnt the part in three hours as his did must have had something wonderful in it.

In Dublin there was one critic who dared to qualify his criticism with sound advice, advising him, in rhyme, to be

> First a critic, then a player,
> And when too soon the flights of time
> Shall give thy shape its manly prime,
> And thought and study have refined,
> And stored with classic tastes thy mind,
> Then to the scene return, and claim
> Thy well-earned meed—perennial fame.

Had Betty, or rather his parents, only taken this advice, he might have become an eternal glory to the British stage, instead of a morning one. From Dublin he went on a tour to Waterford and Cork, still "trailing clouds of glory by the way." His Cork engagements had to be extended by three nights, owing to the crowds that flocked to see him. There then followed offers, which were accepted, from Glasgow and Edinburgh. He made his first appearance at Glasgow on 21st May, 1804, as *Young Norval*. During the engagement he added *Octavian*, in "*The Mountaineers*," and *Richard III!* to his répertoire. At the performance of "*Douglas*," Home, the author, was present, and said that he had never seen the part better played, according to his idea of the character as he conceived it at the time he wrote it. At Edinburgh his success was continued. The greyest, gravest, and greatest in that grey, grave, and great city vied to do him honour. One critic dared to dissent from the general chorus, and had to leave the town in consequence!

It was England's turn to see the wonder. Mr. Macready, of Birmingham, father of *the* Macready, engaged him. He made his first appearance there on 13th August, 1804. His first four nights, when he appeared as *Norval*, *Rollo*, *Richard III*, and *Hamlet*, were not wildly successful, due, it was said, to careless rehearsing; but on the fifth night, when he appeared as *Hamlet*, he took the whole town by storm, and his engagement was extended for five nights to accommodate the thousands of disappointed ones. On the last night of the engagement the receipts amounted to far more than the theatre was ever supposed to be capable of holding. Young Roscius was very much above accepting a salary. He went on sharing terms!

After the sum of £50 was deducted for expenses he received half the remainder, excepting on two nights, one of which was for his own, the other for his manager's benefit. In this way he made over £600 for thirteen performances. W. C. Macready, who met Betty at this time, says that he was a charming boy, ready and willing to romp and play at their own games with other boys, and quite unspoiled by his success. Whilst at Birmingham negotiations were made for his appearances in London. Graham of Drury Lane had happened to pass through Birmingham whilst Betty was playing there, and at once made him an offer for Drury Lane for seven nights and at half a clear benefit, which would pan out to a hundred pounds or so for the seven nights, an offer which many an experienced actor is more than glad to get. But old Macready, who was called in to advise, said he was worth at least fifty guineas a night and a clear benefit! This was as much as Edmund Kean received at his zenith. Drury Lane not unnaturally demurred to such demands. In the meantime Harris of Covent Garden accepted them, and it was arranged that Betty should appear there for twelve nights at fifty guineas a night and a clear benefit.

Drury Lane, thus forestalled, accused Covent Garden of breaking the tacit agreement between the two theatres, but Covent Garden as usual found a way round by affirming that they had already tentatively approached Betty previously to Drury Lane's offer. Drury Lane then tried to buy up some touring engagements which were to follow Birmingham, but Betty or his advisers would not agree to this. However, it was finally agreed that he should sandwich an engagement at Drury Lane between his two series of appearances at Covent Garden, and this he did.

He made his first appearance at Covent Garden, 1st December, 1804, as *Selim* in "*Barbarossa*."

The scene outside the theatre beggared description. The military had to be called out to keep the crowds in order. Many were seriously injured and crushed in their efforts to get to the doors, or away from them. The first act of the play was scarcely listened to, so anxious were the audience for *Selim*, who did not enter until the second. When he did so a shout went up that nearly lifted the roof off. Betty was not one whit abashed, but appeared perfectly calm, cool, and collected, and the audience experienced the same surprise and delight of Dublin, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Birmingham, and the many other towns at which he had now appeared. It was incredible, yet it was true, that a mere boy could, by the magic of his art, make such stuff as Brown's "*Barbarossa*" appear moving and convincing, even beautiful. But such was the case, and a few nights later when he appeared as *Young Norval* in Horne's vastly superior tragedy, he set the seal on the great impression he had made the first night. All London was now at his feet. His Life (not a very long one) was published, and sold like hot cakes. At their special request he was presented to the King and the Prince of Wales. The latter allowed him to roam all over Carlton House, and the former sent for him to Drury Lane, whither His Majesty had been to see the "*School for Scandal*," more to his taste than "*Lover's Vows*," in which Betty had been appearing "over the way." On Saturday, 9th December, he made his last appearance for the present at Covent Garden, and a rumour going round to the effect that it was his farewell of the stage, the crowd nearly wrecked the theatre in their endeavours to get in. The doors at the back of the circle were taken off their hinges and seats were erected beyond them, from which it was just possible the occupants might some time during the evening catch a glimpse of the "Young Roscius." Much the same state of things occurred on Monday, 10th December, when he first appeared at Drury Lane as *Young Norval*. His playing of the part had improved, and his dying scene was averred to be a marvel of simplicity and unforced effect. His life seemed just to ebb away. There was not a dry eye in the audience as the last word "mother" quivered on his dying lips. The scene had been played hundreds of times, on "*East Lynne*" lines, by maudlin, sentimental actors; but this gentle boy's passing, without a germ of self-consciousness or self-pity, was not sentiment, but tragedy, and tragedy of a very high order indeed. All his satellites followed him to Drury Lane, and he was feasted, fêted, and petted by the highest in the land, who waited for him outside the stage-door to take him to their houses in their carriages and chairs. It is scarcely surprising that towards the close of the season he fell ill of gastric trouble, which confined him to his room for some days.

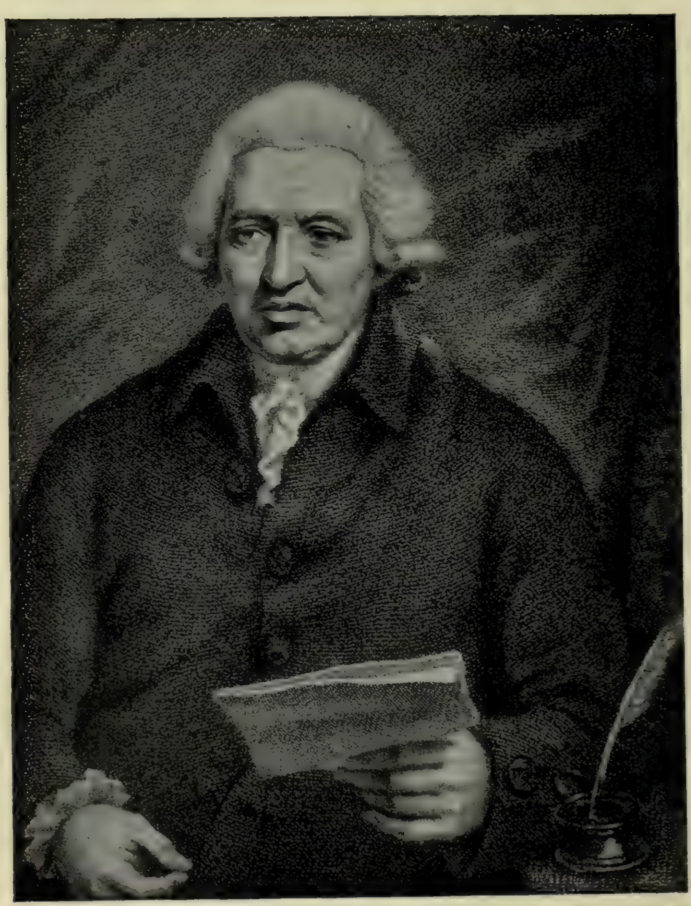
At one time he was really very seriously ill, but he recovered and went to Bushey Park to recruit. During his illness public bulletins were issued, and he was treated generally as though he were a royal princeling. The bulletins caused some gibing and joking epigrams in the fashion of the time. Among the most popular was the following:—

A little Boy was sick with wine, punch, and full-eating,
And the Public it was sick with a little Boy's Bulletin.

But he recovered, and the following season played twenty-four nights at each of the two great theatres, at an increased salary. London now saw his *Hamlet* for the first time, and the great Mr. Pitt adjourned the House of Commons that the members might be able to attend the performance! As a national attraction the Young Roscius vied with the Derby! He was presented to the Queen and Princesses by the King himself. In the interim between the two London seasons he had toured again in the north, making £2000 in little over a fortnight. London first saw his *Richard III* and *Macbeth* at the end of 1805, when he appeared on alternate nights. He does not seem to have quite succeeded in convincing in either of these characters, though the scene with the *Lady Anne* was said to be masterly! Of his *Macbeth* the less said the better—nothing much apparently *was* said! It was a mercy he never attempted *King Lear!* Towards the close of this season the enthusiasm began to abate, but it continued for some years longer in the provinces, and he added many more laurels to his crown, and many, many more guineas to the already ample fortune he had amassed.

His last appearance as an "Infant Phenomenon" was made at Bath in March, 1808, when a dispute as to his abilities between two officers would have led to a duel, and possibly a death, but for the intervention of the authorities. Betty was then placed with a tutor until July, 1810, when he was entered as a fellow commoner of Christ's College, Cambridge. Whilst at Cambridge he could never bear any allusion to his days of glory. The conversation had only to turn on theatrical topics for him to lapse into silence. No one ever quite knew why, unless it was that he was an exceptionally sensible and sensitive boy, who perhaps felt that he had been made a public fool of. If his abilities had been exaggerated it was not his fault, and his private conduct had been beyond praise, thoroughly modest, manly, unassuming, and utterly unspoilt. He did not remain long at Cambridge or take his degree, as his father's death less than a year after his entrance into the University led to his withdrawal from it. He now determined to adopt the stage as a profession and made his re-entrée at Bath in February, 1812. The following November he appeared at Covent Garden in his old part of *Selim*. But though he was obviously an accomplished actor he seemed quite unable to establish any hold upon the hearts of his audience. He continued touring and acting at intervals in the provinces for twelve years. On one occasion he encountered the fiery Edmund Kean at Exeter, who sternly refused to play "seconds" to him "or any one else but John Kemble." In Scotland, and at Newcastle and Birmingham, he appeared with Macready, who always affirmed that he had all the abilities but not the application necessary for a really great actor. In 1824 he finally retired from the stage after a farewell benefit at Southampton on 9th August, 1824. Exactly fifty years later, on 24th August, 1874, he died in London. The years of his retirement were passed in comfortable circumstances and tranquil enjoyment of the fruits of his early labours. At the age of thirty-three he had amassed a fortune very much larger than usually falls to the lot of the most successful actor after a full career. Betty realized this, appreciated his good fortune, and spent much of it doing good, and especially in assisting theatrical charities. He never gave himself any airs, but frankly admitted that his early abilities had been exaggerated, and that the enthusiastic worshippers of his genius had been deceived. One wonders how far they were so. Certainly it all seems too good to be true. But certain indisputable facts point to something very exceptional. His marvellously retentive memory and lightning grasp. He never had to be told a thing twice. The wonderful force that propelled him. He *had* to be an actor, or he would have died. The wonderful facility, simplicity and naturalness of such effects as were within his scope, all point to something very akin to genius. Was it really there and nipped in the early bud, or rather early bloom, by the unwise, forcing tactics of those responsible for him, or the exaggerated adulation which insisted upon the performance of characters utterly beyond his boyish mental grasp, wonderful though that was? Macready, who acted with him in after life, and many who saw him play, affirmed again and again that the powers were there, but an irresistible lethargy prevented his exerting them or exercising them on new material. After sifting all the evidence, it looks almost as though Master Betty was a real genius, whose powers were strangled at their birth by that most effective of all destroyers, premature success.

Of his amiable, modest character, it is impossible to speak too highly. In the height of his glory he was never known to "put on side," so to speak. There is only one instance, and that occurred in after life, and Macready is the authority, of anything approaching condescension on his part. What Macready had to say against any one was sometimes negligible. What he had to say for them was always dependable, and he had much to say for Master Betty.



CHARLES MACKLIN.

(From the portrait by John Opie, R.A.)

COMEDY

CHARLES MACKLIN

1690 (?)–1797

THE exact date of the birth of Charles Macklin, or McLaughlin, to give him his real name, is conjectural, but one thing is certain, that it took place quite an exceptionally long time before his death! Accounts vary, but the most convincing, and best supported by circumstantial evidence, says that he was born in 1690, two months before the Battle of the Boyne, from which place, his parents being on the wrong side, he was conveyed to a place of safety hidden in a turf-basket, known as a "kish." According to his own account, always very unconvincing, he was born somewhere about 1699, but there is very good reason to suppose that at a certain period of his career he had prudent and romantic reasons for reducing his age, and afterwards stuck by the reduction. In any case, the fact that he was born at the close of the seventeenth century and in Ireland, effectually precluded the possibility of there being any written or official evidence of his arrival, for no official registry was kept in Ireland at that time. Sometimes the record was tattooed upon the arm of the subject. This operation, however, was not performed upon Macklin, although it was on his sister, probably about a year previously, and so affords some sort of evidence as to his own arrival. Possibly her demeanour under the operation had something to do with its being neglected in the case of her more distinguished brother. His father died not long after the battle, broken-hearted at the fallen fortunes of his family, and young Charles was left to the care of his widowed mother. In less than three years that good lady married again, partly, to do her justice, for her son's sake, a Mr. O'Meally, an old soldier and a gentleman, who, finding his occupation gone when the war was over, had bought a public-house called "The Eagle" and set up as a publican.

Even at this early age the Bohemian society that gathered at this place began to have attractions for the youthful Charles, and his mother made the first of many futile attempts to remove him from such influences by sending him to school at a village near Dublin, called Island Bridge. Kirkman in his biography gives us a very detailed account of Macklin's life at school, which is not trustworthy. In fact, on the whole, Kirkman's biography is a Georgian romance. But if the boy was father of the man, some of it may be believed, for he appears to have been an exceptionally violent-tempered but clever boy, with a wonderful talent for mimicry, a genius for getting into scrapes, and always at daggers-drawn with his master and bitter enemy, one Nicholson. Nicholson was a Scotchman, and to him may be credited the inception of the animosity always shown by Macklin to that race.

A favourite prank of the boys at this and other schools in the neighbourhood, was to jump from the bridges or the masts of ships into the Liffey. Kirkman says that Macklin was probably the first to attempt "that seemingly hazardous feat." There is no particular reason to suppose that he was the first.

The experiment is not often tried nowadays, probably because it is no longer "seemingly hazardous." To be immersed in the Liffey for however short a period is now most certainly and unquestionably fatal.

It is also said that at school Macklin made his debut as an actor, perhaps one might say as an actress, for it was in the female character of *Monimia* in "*Orphans*," at the instance, according to the romantic Kirkman, of a friend of the youth's called Mrs. Wilkinson. This was in 1708, and his success in the part had such an effect upon him that he and two companions ran away to London, furnishing themselves with the sinews of war by a proceeding they may have justified under the title of commandeering, Macklin thieving from his mother to the extent of £9. It is scarcely surprising that at least one of the three young rogues ended his days on the gallows.

In London, whilst their money lasted, they had a fine time, but soon the question of raising the wind arose. One of the companions suggested robbery as an effective means, but Macklin struck at doing that sort of thing outside his own family, and "ganged his ain gait." He was now thrown entirely upon his own resources, which, however, were not inconsiderable, although sometimes he was in desperate straits. One day, when wandering aimlessly, or most probably "aimfully," for one may be sure young Macklin always had his wits about him, about the streets of the Borough he espied a young woman whom he thought he recognized. She returned the compliment, and turned out to have once been a maid in his mother's employ. She at once took young Charles in and introduced him to her mistress, a widow lady and "mine hostess" of a tavern.

Charles was given temporary quarters, which very soon became permanent ones, for he was a valuable acquisition, and his antics, mimicking, singing and dancing, drew crowds to the tavern. So much so that the wily widow, fearful lest she should lose him, and despite his teens, took and married him at one of those places then abounding in London, where doubtful weddings were solemnized by doubtful parsons.

However, the widow's bliss did not last very long, for her servant seeing the toils into which her young master was being enmeshed, wrote to his mother and acquainted her with his whereabouts and habits, with the result that the bogus marriage was soon annulled and Charles found himself back in Ireland. The next well-authenticated thing that we know about him is that in 1713 he was employed as a scout, or badge-man, as it was then called, in Trinity College.

For taking this menial position, Kirkman finds the most lofty and praiseworthy reasons on our hero's part, who only did such a thing in consideration of the opportunities it afforded of self-improvement and education! Whilst Macklin may safely be said to have made the most of any opportunities of self-advancement that came his way, it was not in that capacity that he achieved fame amongst his "young gentlemen." For many a long day legends hung about Trinity College of the uncouth-looking scout who betrayed unexpected talents of mimicry and traces of a strange genius. Eventually an opportunity again arose of crossing the water to England, this time a legitimate one, as far as the departure from Ireland was concerned, and Charles was not slow to avail himself of it. It is said that he had the chance of going off to try his fortunes in Germany, and so set off in company with a patron, whom he conveniently deserted as soon as London was reached, and we next hear of him amongst his old companions in the Borough at a place called Hockley-in-the-Hole. There one Maloney, a friend of his mother's, ran him to earth and conveyed him back to Ireland, and Trinity College. But this little story comes from the doubtful Kirkman. The next really authentic news that we have of him is that he is on the stage at last, doing "general utility" with a strolling company at Bristol. It is said that he made his first appearance as *Richmond* in "*Richard III*," and that he made his first great hit, not on the stage, but in the fives courts, when by his own personal skill he was instrumental in helping Bristol to beat the rival city of Bath. From this time for some years he was employed now at Bristol, now at Bath, and now on tour, generally playing good parts, but always hampered by a strong brogue. But he set himself seriously to conquer that disadvantage and eventually succeeded in doing so, and becoming one of the finest elocutionists on the English stage. ? In 1825 we hear of his playing *Alcander* in the "*Aedipus*" of Dryden and Lee at the Lincoln's Inn Theatre. He then divided his attention between London and Bristol, and made fitful appearances at Harper's Booth, Southwark, at Lincoln's Inn again, and at Sadler's Wells, and on the 31st October, 1733, made his first appearance at Drury Lane, the then Mecca of all actors, as *Brazen* in the "*Recruiting Officer*." His name, which went through various metamorphoses before it finally settled to Macklin, appears on the programme as "Mechlin." Henceforward he played several good parts, notably *Marplot*, *Lord Foppington* in the "*Careless Husband*," and he created the part of *Colonel Bluff* in Fielding's "*Intriguing Chambermaid*." For the opportunity of thus getting his nose in (and it was no small nose!) at Drury Lane he had to thank a strike of Highmore, the manager's, principal actors. A few years later his secession from that theatre was to be due to a strike. Highmore went out into the highways and hedges to get what actors he could to fill the vacancies, and Macklin was amongst them. But when the strikers again came to heel early in 1734, Fleetwood having become the manager, Macklin found himself out of work, and joined Fielding's company at the Haymarket, making his first appearance there as *Squire Badger* in "*Don Quixote*." He did not remain long at the Haymarket, for in September of the same year Fleetwood offered him the assistant stage-managership and the opportunity of playing parts at Drury Lane, which he accepted, and appeared as *Poins* in 1734. There now followed a fairly settled period for such a fitful character. Macklin remained at Drury Lane without a break for ten years. Domestically he had "settled down" three years previously and married a widow, according to Kirkman, a Mrs. Ann Grace, other biographers have it a Miss Grace Purvor. Whatever her maiden or widowhood name was, as Mrs. Macklin she turned out a first-rate actress, especially in such parts as *Mistress Quickly*, the nurse in "*Romeo and Juliet*," and *Hostess* in "*Henry V*." At home Macklin seems to have been a model husband and father, fond and affectionate, bringing up his children, and especially his daughter, who afterwards became a very capable actress, with great care and devotion. But it was not so in the green-room, where his temper, quarrelsomeness, and ferocity appalled every one. There was a dreadful occurrence in 1735, when, in a fit of ungovernable rage, he thrust a stick into the eye of an actor called Thomas Hallam, who died from the effects. Macklin was tried on a charge of murder, and the jury brought in manslaughter and practically acquitted him, for he was acting again very shortly afterwards. The quarrel was all about a stupid little wig, which Macklin had worn in a still more stupid little farce called "*Trick for Trick*," and which Hallam had "borrowed without asking"! In 1758, he had another quarrel, this time a more justifiable one, with Quin, whom he knocked into a chair and, to use his own words, "pummelled most damnably." There is no doubt he did, for he was no mean exponent with his fists, and the pummelling probably did the overbearing Quin no little good. Macklin's own account of this drubbing, given (the account, not the drubbing) when he was nearly a hundred years old, is as entertaining and edifying reading as Kirkman's detailed account of the murder trial is the reverse. There is humour in the fact that, at this trial, Quin was amongst those who bore testimony that the prisoner, Macklin, was a man of quiet and peaceable disposition! Quin challenged Macklin to fight and a meeting was arranged, but Macklin did not turn up at the trysting-place, suddenly recollecting an important engagement to play in pantomime, and eventually being prevailed upon, as he put it, by Fleetwood to apologize. But he and Quin remained bitter enemies for many, many years, and the quarrel was only made up when the former was near the end of his life, and the latter a very old man. The two old actors were the last left behind of a merry tavern party. Quin was the first to make a move towards a reconciliation, Macklin readily responded, and the two old fogies shook hands, and Macklin presently showed that his muscular abilities were still with him by carrying on his back the now helpless Quin to his home in the Piazza at Covent Garden.

Quin, who had a brutal way of saying apt things, is said to have remarked in Macklin's hearing, that "If God writes a legible hand, that fellow is a villain." Another time he referred to the lines on Macklin's face, to his face, as cordage; so there is no doubt that, taking one thing with another, he richly deserved his pummelling.

To resume our main thread, Macklin had, in 1737, appeared for the first time in company with his wife in "*The Beggars' Opera.*" They were both extremely successful in their respective parts of *Mr. and Mrs. Peachum;* this was followed in 1738 by another "hit" on Macklin's part as *Jerry Blackacre* in the "*Plain Dealer,*" after which came further hits in the above-mentioned quarrel!

All this while Macklin was performing most admirably the rôle of paterfamilias, and training his daughter with the utmost care for the distinguished part he felt sure she was to play on the stage; and if she never quite soared to the heights he had hoped, she rose extremely high. A less praiseworthy side to his life was the habit of gambling, to which, in company with his manager Fleetwood, he had fallen a victim. They frequented "White's" and played freely, and of the many ugly stories that are told few are uglier than that of the low-down cunning, to give it a mild name, by which Macklin succeeded in transferring a large load of debt from his own shoulders to those of the wretched poet Whitehead, who spent many years in a debtors' prison in consequence. In 1740 Macklin first became really famous as a comedian by his performance of *Scrub* in the "*Beaux' Stratagem*," and in the same year took place an event that had a very far-reaching event on Macklin's own life, and indeed on that of the whole drama of that era. He then first made the acquaintance of, and soon became on terms of intimate friendship with, a young actor called David Garrick. Garrick and he had first met some years before, when Garrick was supposed to be carrying on business as a wine-merchant in the Strand, but was in reality the genius that was to put into concrete form those ideals which Macklin had treasured in his grim soul, probably ever since the time he first felt the call of the footlights.

From 1740 till 1743 these two were scarcely a day apart, and a curious couple they must have been. The sour, dour-faced man, tall and gaunt, fast advancing towards middle-age, with the soul of a youthful enthusiast and the appearance of a criminal, and the gay, debonair little fellow brimming over with genius. But if they presented a curious appearance then, they must have presented a still more odd one when, in 1742, the duet became a trio, and they set up housekeeping in company with Peg Woffington. Of this disastrous experiment we have already read. It was the beginning of the breach between Macklin and Garrick, which was widened beyond redemption in 1743, owing to Garrick's so-called apostasy, after the strike against Fleetwood. Looked at from Garrick's own point of view his conduct seems to have been, on the whole, natural, and looked at from Macklin's, if we will not let ourselves be blinded, as he was, by fury and jealousy, it seems quite understandable and reasonable, if not altogether altruistic or heroic. But Macklin's fury knew no bounds. First he collected a mob around him and sent them to the Drury Lane pit to hoot Garrick; then followed a violent war of pamphlets. Finally, scorning all offers of a *rapprochement*, Macklin left Drury Lane and took to earning his living by taking pupils, and in 1844 he opened the Haymarket with a company of his own training, and amongst that company was the man who was henceforth to be the sharpest thorn that pierced poor Garrick's side, viz., Samuel Foote. Perhaps Macklin regarded Foote as a feather in his own cap!

Although Garrick and Macklin sometimes met again professionally, they were never again on friendly terms, and Macklin's hatred was so bitter and implacable that it was with difficulty he could be prevailed upon to admit Garrick's genius. But when it came to "*King Lear*" he sometimes found himself bound to admit the sublimity of that performance.

The principal production in the Haymarket programme was "*Othello*," with Foote (save the mark!) as *Othello* and Macklin as *Iago*.

However, we are again getting too quickly ahead with our story, for previous to the strike, in 1741, had occurred the greatest theatrical event of Macklin's lifetime, and one that had marked him for all time as one of the giants.

On 14th February, 1741, was produced, practically under Garrick's management, Shakespeare's "*Merchant of Venice.*" It may be presumed that Macklin got this unique opportunity through the influence of the large-hearted Garrick, nor could it have been an easy matter for Garrick to bring about. Every one was opposed to the experiment, Fleetwood, the manager, especially so, and it can be conjectured that Quin, who was to play *Antonio*, had something to say on the subject. However it was, Macklin had his way, and events very soon proved it to be the right one. In the first place, he restored Shakespeare's "*Merchant of Venice*," and abolished for all time Lord Lansdowne's wretched substitute, called "*The Jew of Venice*." This, in itself, was a sufficiently drastic change to cause the wiseacres to shake their heads, and many whispered mutterings at rehearsal. The temper of the company, at no time very civilly disposed towards Macklin, may be imagined when it was seen that he was merely walking through his part, and giving no hint as to what sort of a reading he really intended to give.

On his first entrance "on the night" he was received, according to his own and some biographers' accounts, in a silence that chilled him to the marrow. According to other biographers, some eye-witnesses, and his own account at another time, with a roar of applause that cheered him to the soul. Whichever it was, he had not spoken ten words before there was the tense silence of gripping interest, and at the end of the great Trial scene the house was in an uproar. Macklin had conquered. In the face of all opposition he had restored the "*Merchant of Venice*" to its rightful place as one of the greatest of dramas, and *Shylock*, from being the unimportant "comic relief" of the play, took the place it has never since lost, of one of the greatest and most effective characters in the whole range of drama. Was it a wonder that as soon as the play was over, the green-room was besieged by a mighty throng; dukes and duchesses, peers and peeresses, actors and actresses, lions and lionesses, and persons of every kind and description who were in those days permitted to penetrate, unmolested, the mysteries of "Behind the Scenes," pressed forward to shake the victor by the hand, and perhaps mutter that they "had thought so all along," or that the mighty Pope summed up the situation in the immortal couplet—

> This is the Jew
> That Shakespeare drew.

After the above epoch-making experience, the next event of any real importance in Macklin's life was the strike at Drury Lane, the quarrel with Garrick, and the opening of the Haymarket Theatre in 1744 with a company of his own training, already alluded to.

Macklin's *Iago* is said to have been an extremely fine performance, though one can imagine it was lacking a little in subtlety, but Foote's *Othello* did not, evidently, make much of an impression. The tenancy of the Haymarket did not last very long; that of Drury Lane had passed out of the hands of Fleetwood and into those of Lacey, who engaged a powerful company, amongst whom were Mr. and Mrs. Macklin. Previous to his reappearance Macklin, in the custom of the period, spoke a prologue all about himself and his recent exploits, which was received with as much applause as was the actor himself. Amongst other important members of Lacy's company was the elegant Spranger Barry, to whose *Othello* Macklin played *Iago*. There are many romantic stories current about this elegant young man, most of which are pure romance. It is said that before his first appearance as

Othello, Macklin took a great deal of care to be seen very repeatedly with him in public, where the young man's gallant appearance and bearing gave great credence to the well-circulated story that he was an Irish peer, the Earl of Munster to wit. Consequently there was much whispering, nodding and agogging when he stepped upon the stage the first night.

Macklin was delighted at the success of the joke. As he was never the sort of person to do anything for the mere fun of the thing, he probably had his private ends!

In 1746 Macklin made his first appearance as an author in an historical tragedy called "*Henry VII, or the Popish Impostor!*" a play on the subject of Perkin Warbeck. In it the author played the part of *Huntley*. It was a dismal play and a dismal failure, and the author is said to have lost £20 by it, and to have pleaded the flimsy excuse for its want of success that he wrote it in six weeks! Within the next year or so Macklin made two more appearances as an author, in neither of which he had much success. "*A Will and no Will, or a Bone for the Lawyers*," an unpublished farce, was played for Mrs. Macklin's benefit at Drury Lane on 23rd April, 1746, and "*The Suspicious Husband Criticized*," a skit on Dr. Hoadly's Covent Garden success "*The Suspicious Husband*," was given for his own benefit on 24th March, 1747.

On this occasion Macklin also played, probably not for the first time, a part without which, like the *Ghost*, no actor's record is complete, namely, the *Grave Digger* in "*Hamlet*," Barry's *Hamlet*.

The following year, 1747, saw the beginning of the great partnership between Garrick and Lacy in the management of Drury Lane Theatre. Things were now on a much more businesslike footing, and the work of the theatre was divided into two departments, Lacy practically taking the charge of the front of the house, the wardrobe, and the business management generally, and Garrick undertaking all the artistic considerations, producing plays, engaging authors and actors, etc. One of the first authors whom he engaged was his old enemy Macklin, whose farce, "*The Fortune Hunters, or Widow Bewitched*," had a very doubtful reception. But if there was doubt about Macklin's merits as an author, there was none at all about them as an actor, and Garrick speedily saw to it that they were requisitioned. Thus the two old enemies buried the hatchet, though Macklin was fond of digging it up again. It has been said by many that Garrick in so speedily engaging Macklin did so out of a desire to make just restitution for the wrong he had done him. Whether that is so or not, the fact remains that he did engage him, and Macklin had no justification for the hatred that still smouldered within him and blinded him to a just appreciation of his manager's real genius. The truth of the matter probably is that, in thus holding out the hand of fellowship to his enemy, Garrick was only heaping coals of fire upon a smouldering furnace of envy and jealousy.

They played together in Moore's "*The Foundling*," Garrick playing with all his accustomed buoyancy and spirits as the hero, *Young Belmont*, and Macklin playing the obsequious villain *Faddle*. The two women's parts were played by Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Cibber.

The next important event in Macklin's life was his visit to Dublin, which took place this same year. He and his wife went there in response to an offer of £800 a year from Thomas Sheridan. Macklin played with very great success his favourite characters, *Shylock*, *Scrub* in "*The Beaux' Stratagem*," and *Sir Gilbert Wrangle* in "*The Refusal.*"

But the engagement was a disastrous one, and before it was half finished Macklin was involved in a lawsuit with Sheridan, which, however, was settled out of court. Macklin is said to have accepted a sum of £300 and cleared out, and no doubt Sheridan considered himself cheaply rid of him.

On his return to England, Macklin found his way to London by easy stages, apparently stopping to play a short and successful season at Chester at the head of a touring company. Whether this is so or not, we find him and Mrs. Macklin reappearing at Covent Garden in the winter of 1749 or 1750. At the same theatre were Barry and Quin, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Woffington. Barry and Mrs. Cibber having quarrelled with Garrick, and joined Mr. Rich, who at this time had a very powerful company round him. Their first appearance was made in the "*Miser*," Macklin appearing as *Lovegold* and Mrs. Macklin as *Lappet*. After this followed the famous duel, when "*Romeo and Juliet*" was produced simultaneously at the two theatres. In the production at Covent Garden, Macklin played *Mercutio* and Mrs. Macklin the *Nurse*. "As petulant a nurse," says Kirkman, "as ever was seen."

Of the important new characters to be added to his repertory, in addition to *Mercutio*, were *Polonius*, *Vellum* in "*The Drummer*," *Lopez* in "*The Mistake*," and *Renault* in "*Venice Preserved.*"

Of his old characters *Sir Gilbert Wrangle* was always a great draw. "*Othello*" was also revived, and Macklin alternated *Iago* with Ryan, whilst Barry alternated

Othello with Quin, and it is said that Macklin's *Iago* was as superior to Ryan's as Barry's *Othello* was to Quin's.

In 1751, a group of distinguished amateurs, all pupils of Macklin, who was a magnificent teacher, hired Drury Lane for the night and gave a performance of "*Othello*" which, according to the fulsome critics of the day, was far finer than anything that had ever been seen upon the professional stage at that time! *Othello* was performed by Sir Francis Delaval, and *Iago* by one John (afterwards Lord) Delaval. Drury Lane was *en fête* for the occasion, and the whole show seems to have reflected great and thoroughly deserved credit on Macklin.

Perhaps this success had some effect iu propelling his next course of action, for he began seriously to think of retiring from active service on the stage and expending his energies in other directions. These plans matured in 1753, when a great farewell benefit took place at Drury Lane on 20th December, at which he played *Sir Gilbert Wrangle* in "*The Refusal*" to the *Lady Wrangle* of his wife and *Charlotte* of his daughter, now just beginning to make her way on the stage. He also appeared as *Buck* in the farce "*An Englishman in Paris*," and recited a prologue by Garrick, who is said to have breathed a prayer as he wrote it, that Macklin would not return to the stage.

Some said Garrick feared him as a rival, but it is much more likely he regarded him as a nuisance. After the performance Macklin delivered a quaint and self-centred epilogue, and then bowed himself off the stage amidst the plaudits of an enthusiastic and crowded house. He then left the theatre, and lost no time in putting the great scheme he had been nursing all this time into operation. It was nothing if not ambitious. Successful as he had been in teaching some folk some things, Macklin, with all the exaggerated egotism of the self-made man, decided that he was competent to teach everybody everything.

He opened a coffee-house and tavern under the Piazza at Covent Garden, when at four o'clock in the afternoon was what was known as a "three-shilling ordinary," at which Macklin would preside, after which the guests would adjourn to something quite extraordinary! In a large room in Hart Street, hard by, was held what was called "The British Inquisition." This was a sort of series of lectures at which Macklin discoursed of every subject under and over the sun; art, religion, politics, and after the lectures public debates were held upon some such subject as: "*Whether the People of Great Britain have profited by their Intercourse with*, *or their Imitation of*, *the French Nation*," and so on.

At first "The British Inquisition" was a great success. People flocked to it from all quarters, and Macklin had several pupils. But, unfortunately, the satirical Samuel Foote of the Haymarket, seeing in it excellent material for burlesque, so ridiculed the whole proceedings that they soon died, and Macklin, who had sunk a lot of money in the concern, having been robbed and plundered without scruple by his servants and retainers, in addition to the expense he had lavished upon decorating the place, found himself in the bankruptcy court, but was able to pay 20s. in the £.

After the failure of "The British Inquisition," Macklin again returned to the Irish theatre, but this time in the rôle of manager. In conjunction with Barry he applied for a lease of the old music-hall in

Crow Street, which they intended to open as a theatre, but their plans were most vigorously opposed by Sheridan of the "Smock Alley Theatre," who did everything in his power to prevent the fruition of the Macklin-Barry scheme.

There was a battle of pamphlets, but the building of the new theatre proceeded apace. But there were dissensions within the camp as well as without, as there generally were where Macklin was concerned. The partnership with Barry was dissolved before the new theatre was opened, and Macklin returned to England and Drury Lane, where he appeared as *Shylock*. It was the first time he had appeared at this theatre for six years, and his reception was immense.

There was also produced, on the same date, his farce of "*Love à la Mode*," a play that had been refused by the great Garrick, whose judgment of plays seems often to have been faulty. "*Love à la Mode*," though said by some not to be entirely original, marked a very great advance on Macklin's other work, and held the stage for a long time, Macklin played the part of *Sir Archy McSarcasm*, and his daughter that of *Charlotte*.

Mrs. Macklin had died in 1758, and left a good record of industry, honesty, and affection.

In 1759 Macklin married again, Miss Elizabeth Jones, of Chester.

From Drury Lane he emigrated back to Covent Garden, when on 26th January, 1761, his play of "*The Married Libertine*" was produced. It was not very favourably received, partly because in the character of *Lord Belleville* Macklin is said to have ridiculed a nobleman then living. The nine nights which entitled an author to a benefit were with difficulty squeezed out of the play. Between 1761 and 1767 Macklin was repeatedly in Dublin, re-entering into the management with Barry and Woodward of the Crow Street Theatre, taking a house in Drumcondra Lane where he pursued his old course of taking pupils, and appearing at the Smock Alley Theatre in 1763, when he produced his "*True-born Irishman*," playing the part of *Murrough O'Dogherty*, which was a great success in Dublin, though a failure when it was afterwards produced at Covent Garden. At his house in Drumcondra Lane, Macklin is said to have had as pupils the highest in the land, who would sometimes pay him the compliment of mistaking the second Mrs. Macklin for his daughter. That this daughter was extremely fortunate in her father is proved by an admirable letter, full of parental wisdom and affection, written from Dublin on 21st February, 1764, well authenticated and reproduced in Kirkman's "Life" (Vol. I, 455).

In it Macklin alludes to the forthcoming production of "*The True-born Scotchman*," by far the best play he ever wrote. Amongst other things he chides his daughter for wrong abbreviations such as *couldn't*, *shan't*, *wouldn't*, asks her how this would look, "I am, Sr, yr. mt. obt. um'ble sevt.," and objects to such vile apologies for scanty letters as "*being greatly hurried with business*," and "*must now conclude as the post is this instant going out*." "Then, why did you not begin sooner?" !! Altogether a most admirable letter, which shows Macklin in a good light. In 1764, according to Kirkman, Macklin came over to London to superintend Royal theatricals at the *Privy Gardens*, and to enjoy the "honourable distinction of instructing His Royal Highness the Duke of York in the science of acting." H.R.H. is said to have displayed a "correctness and chastness" in his acting. As his Grace was only one year old at the time, his performance must, at any rate, have been innocent!

On 17th February, 1766, Macklin produced at the Crow Street Theatre in Dublin his best play, "*The True-born Scotchman,*" afterwards achieving something like classical fame as "*The Man of the World.*" In it Macklin played the part of *Sir Pertinax McSycophant*. In 1767 his "*True-born Irishman,*" under the title of "*The Irish Fine Lady,*" was produced at Covent Garden, where it was a failure. Macklin in publicly apologizing for its failure, said that he had not realized that there was a geography in humour! It is curious, considering his own nationality, that his Irishman should have been a failure and the Scotchman a success. Probably the Scotchman was the truer picture!

Then, in 1770, we hear of Macklin back in Dublin again, where his "*Man of the World*" was produced at the Capel Street Theatre.

During his many visits to Dublin, Macklin's salary generally took the form of a moiety of the night's takings, and sometimes totalled up to a very formidable amount.

Kirkman gives us extracts from the actor's notebook showing the figures, though it is difficult to calculate upon what principle they were arrived at, but one night Macklin earned as much as £40 13s. 4d.; another, and this when one of his own plays, the "*True-born Irishman,*" was given, his share amounted to 1s. 4½d.!! On another night £0 0s. 0d. is given as the night's takings, of which Macklin got a moiety! Whatever his fees were, Macklin was certainly, at one time or another, the mainstay of both the Smock Alley and the Crow Street Theatres, and it is not surprising that he seriously meditated settling down in Ireland.

In 1769 Mrs. O'Meally, Macklin's mother, died, apparently in the ninety-ninth year of her age, but it is difficult to authenticate this fact, which, however, is to some extent supported by the very great age to which her son lived, and for which there seem to be none but hereditary reasons.

In 1772 he was back at Covent Garden, where he appeared as *Macbeth*. He took a lot of care and trouble in dressing the part correctly, in Scottish garb, as opposed to the ridiculous English military dress, worn by Garrick, and painted by Zoffany in the picture now in the Garrick Club.

But in spite of this fact the audience would have none of him. It is difficult to discover the reason for their hostility. It was partly, perhaps, because Macklin was a comedian, and expected to behave as such, partly because the character was looked upon as the especial property of one Smith, and possibly also, because Macklin played it badly. But that personal malice and animosity had something to do with it was proved by the fact that on 18th November, when he again appeared in his most famous and popular impersonation of *Shylock*, he was refused a hearing. There was an uproar in the house, and Colman, the manager, had to come before the curtain and publicly dismiss Macklin before the audience were satisfied.

Colman is said to have been made to go down on his knees. The riot was principally at the instigation of a gang called respectively James, Clarke, Aldus, Miles, Leigh, and Sparkes. The exact reasons for their conduct never came to light, and there were those who believed that Garrick was at the bottom of it, but even if he could have stooped to such a thing it was doubtful if he could have carried it through. He was not made of the stuff of conspirators. Anyway, whoever the instigators were, Macklin brought an action in the King's Bench against the perpetrators, won it, and then behaved most magnanimously in not accepting the damages, £600 and his expenses, which were awarded him. All he asked was that the defendants should take one hundred pounds' worth of tickets on three separate occasions. At his own benefit, at his daughter's benefit, and on the occasion of his reappearance, when the money would be handed over to the proprietors of the theatre. He conducted his own case with great ability, and at the close the judge, Lord Mansfield, in expressing his complete approval of the great actor's conduct, said, "You have met with great applause to-day; you never acted better," which was quite probable! On the 18th May Macklin made his reappearance as *Shylock* and *Sir Archy McSarcasm*, and had a great reception. Thus encouraged, he resolved to have another try at tragedy, and on 12th November of the same year he appeared as *Richard III.* But his performance was not a success, a fact which even Kirkman admits.

He then continued to divide his attention between Dublin and London, and on 10th May, 1781, appeared as *Sir Pertinax McSycophant* in his own "*Man of the World.*" According to the "Dictionary of National Biography," this, one of the best comedies of the last century and far and away the best thing Macklin ever wrote, was refused a licence by the censor, or rather the sub-censor, Capell, who declined to give up the play, which was only obtained ten years later through the interest of some eminent lawyers.

As, when the play was produced, the title was changed from "*The True-born Scotchman*" to "*The Man of the World*" it may be presumed that the licence was refused on the grounds that national offence might be given.

Certainly history repeats itself!

After a doubtful beginning the play settled down to a lasting success, in which the most brilliant thing was the author's own performance of *Sir Pertinax McSycophant.*

This year Macklin suffered a severe loss in the death of his daughter, who died in her forty-eighth year. She appears to have been an excellent actress, and an equally excellent daughter and woman. She was deeply religious, and attended church as often as rehearsal! Macklin himself was now very old, almost in his ninetieth year. But he went on acting with his accustomed vigour, even made more trips to Dublin, according to Kirkman, at salaries that would be even nowadays considered phenomenal; but in 1788 the end of his acting career began to appear in sight, though not by any means that of his life. On the 10th January he broke down in *Shylock*, and had to speak to his audience, excusing himself on the ground of his great age. This was but the forerunner of similar accidents, one of which happened when playing his own part of *Sir Pertinax.* On 7th May, 1789, he made his last appearance. It can scarcely be said as an actor. He was dressed for *Shylock*, and meeting Mrs. Pope, dressed as *Portia*, asked her who was going to play *Shylock.* Then his senses returned to him, in the curious fitful way they continued to do for the next and last ten years of his life. He went on to the stage, spoke a few lines of his part, after which his mind again became a blank. He made a broken apology to the audience, and with tears in his own eyes, and tears in theirs, left the stage which he had served so long and so well, for ever.

The last years of this wonderful old man's life were embittered by the conduct of his only son, John Macklin. This young gentleman was sent out to India, and commended to the care of no less a person than the great Warren Hastings. He had every opportunity that a kind and indulgent father and distinguished patronage could give him, but he made bad use of his chances, dissipated his money, and offended his father by seldom answering the old man's excellent, confidential, and trustful letters. He finally gave up the East India Company's service, probably because it was on the point of giving him up, and returned to London, where he tried fortune at the Bar, and again failed. He then joined the army, and is said to have served in the American War with great gallantry. But the hardships of the campaign, according to Kirkman, though it was most probably the easyships of the period antecedent to it, told upon his health, and he returned to London and died of a lockjaw in 1790.

His reckless extravagance had completely impoverished his old father, who but for that might have now been in affluent circumstances. But the public was not forgetful of her old servant, and a subscription edition of his two best plays, "*The Man of the World*" and "*Love à la Mode*," was published under the editorship of Mr. Murphy. This realized the sum of about £1500, and with it an annuity of £200 for Macklin and £75 for Mrs. Macklin was purchased.

True to the principles of most annuitants, Macklin got his money's worth, and lived on for some six or seven years. Henceforward the old man's days were more comfortable and free from anxiety, but they were not very cheerful, for he was in an advanced state of senile decay, and those who were told he was a hundred remarked that he looked older. His well-known figure was generally to be found prowling about Covent Garden, or seated in the pit of one of the theatres, in any of which a seat was always found for him. He was also a frequenter of various public-houses in the neighbourhood, and it was great sport to get the old man in a communicative mood, and hear his reminiscences, especially that of his fight with Quin, which was always good telling. The anecdotes were extracted with difficulty, for his memory had completely failed him, but as there were many present who knew the stories by heart, he never lacked a prompter.

He died on 11th July, 1797, at his house in Tavistock Row, either at the age of a hundred or a hundred and seven years.

His final exit was not an undignified one. In the morning he got up, washed himself all over with warm brandy or gin, as was his custom, changed his clothes (he always went to bed in his clothes), put on clean linen, and seemed perfectly happy and composed. Then he got back into bed, lay there quite quietly for an hour, and suddenly turning to his wife, exclaimed, "*Let me go!*" and went!

So passed this curious, and in some ways great, old man. His widow, being his second wife, survived him some years, and was given a benefit at Covent Garden on 17th June, 1805.

The character of Charles Macklin is not difficult to sketch. It was drawn in very decisive lines, and might indeed be described as a study in black and white. There were no neutral tints about him, none of the complicated little semitones of colour which render the attempt to portray such a character as Garrick's so difficult. Charles Macklin was a born artist, with all those attributes which are commonly supposed to be necessary to the artistic temperament. He was sensitive, self-centred, quarrelsome, and morbid to quite an exceptional degree. In the course of his exceptionally long life he scarcely entered into any sort of a contract which did not end in a law-suit, or a settlement out of court, in which Macklin got more than his deserts, excepting on the one famous occasion when he declined to accept the compensation he really deserved.

It is doubtful if his conduct on this occasion was entirely altrustic. He was a sour, bitter, and it is somewhat to be feared, treacherous old man. For his bitterness and jealousy he had some reason, especially where David Garrick was concerned, for it must have been galling to see a young man step so easily into the shoes which he himself had so long and manfully striven to wear. All those ideas on stage-reform, which Garrick so successfully carried out, were the older man's cherished ideals whilst the younger was still in the nursery. Then as an actor Garrick so quickly and so far surpassed Macklin. Garrick had incomparable grace and charm of manner, together with the subtle mentality that naturally perceived the different points of view and varying lights and shades which render every character interesting, if not sympathetic. Macklin, whose opinions were as pronounced as his features, saw everything in black and white, dealt in violent contrasts, and reproduced in his private life many of the characteristics of his favourite character *Shylock*. Of his treachery the proofs seem painfully clear, especially in the case of Whitehead the poet, who, as we have seen, languished for many years in a debtors' prison as a result of Macklin's duplicity. There is also very significant evidence that during the strike of 1743, when Macklin finally broke with Garrick, he himself played the double part he was so fond of attributing to Garrick, and fell between two stools.

Macklin seems to have had a double allowance of jealousy, the morbid, bitter envy that so often accompanies the artistic temperament, and the fiery jealousy of the Celt. His love of himself was as great as his love of his art. He wanted the stage to be reformed and wanted to be the reformer. He hated the idea of some one else doing the job.

He wanted the stage, indeed the whole world, to be guided by him, and cheerfully undertook such a responsibility when he opened the British Inquisition! His temper was abnormally bad. He was a cantankerous, conceited, clever old man. But he had outstanding virtues. He led a moral life, once his wild-oat period was passed; was an excellent husband and father, a good correspondent, and possessed of extraordinary industry and vigour. He was a genuine Bohemian, fond of his glass of wine, and when ninety years old could drink most young men under the table. He was very clean and neat in his personal habits, and had some of those curious fads that are often associated with centenarians and to which they generally attribute their longevity. He washed himself all over daily in warm spirits and water, always went to bed in his clothes, but not the clothes that he had worn during the day. In fact, he dressed for bed. His wonderful energy and vigour did not begin to desert him until he was long past his eightieth year.

He was one of the most remarkable and striking personalities that have ever appeared on the English stage, and there is little doubt that if his temper had been better, and he had exercised more control over the compelling forces within him, he would have been one of our greatest actors. He was an admirable teacher—many great contemporaries owed everything to him—but he seemed to be debarred by temperament and character from putting into practice what he so admirably preached ; and the trust which he considered reposed in him was taken away and given to another. It was a great pity he was so much his own enemy.

As an actor he seems to have been one of those that exploited his own personality, not, be it understood, in any derogatory sense. He was not the person to stud the town with picture post cards of himself, in different and becoming attitudes, even if he could have done so. But he could not get away from himself. He had such an overpowering and striking personality that all he could do was to transform it into a channel, so to speak, for the character he was to portray. He had not the marvellous versatility of Garrick, who could, as Mrs. Bracegirdle remarked, have played a gridiron. The consequence was that Macklin's range was limited. Unable to get away from himself he had to fit himself to such parts as he could, so that he was not so eminently fitted as Garrick was for the work of stage reform. Garrick could demonstrate by practice how every line of business should be played. Macklin, while holding forth for hours in every direction, could only perform in one. But there is no doubt that in that one he excelled. His great character was, of course, *Shylock*, and for that he was eminently fitted by nature, art, training, and his own natural characteristics.

Since Sir Henry Irving's famous impersonation, *Shylock* is generally regarded as a sort of scapegoat, a prophet, the ill-treated representative of a down-trodden race. In one sense he is all of these things. He is a Jew, bitterly resenting the insults and indignities heaped upon his sacred tribe, but he is no patriot. He is not a would-be righter of the wrongs of his people. His actions are impelled, in the first place, by personal hatred and malice and revenge, and his personal hatred is fanned by racial hatred, until at last he becomes the living embodiment of the deep and undying hatred of his race. But he is never a martyr, and would be the first to own it. The first mistake made *Shylock* too comic and trivial, the last one has made him too grand and deep. *Shylock* was not a grand and deep person. He was a gloomy tyrant, a nasty man with nasty cruel ideas. He had the heart of a stone. *Gratiano's* "Not on thy sole, but on thy soul, harsh Jew, thou makest thy knife keen," is not by any means merely a trivial pun, but a very vivid picture flashing on to the active brain of *Gratiano*. *Shylock's* house, as his daughter remarked, was hell. His professed reverence for the ring that he had from Leah when a bachelor was, as like as not, mainly vanity and superstition. It is more than probable that he bullied Leah into her grave. One's pity goes out to him in his downfall, but that is natural. We are all better than our opinions, and sorry for any one, however bad, who is down, if we are actually present to see their fall.

Macklin was a potential *Shylock* of the stage. He was a representative of an oppressed race, quarrelsome and cantankerous, with the temper of a fiend. He had the appearance for *Shylock*, in fact, he was the part, except, to do him justice, domestically. He had long seen himself, and David Garrick had long seen him, in the part. His triumph was not a surprise to those who really understood him and the character, although, indeed, he exceeded their anticipations. As an accurate rendering of *Shylock* his has probably never been equalled, and never has or will be surpassed. Irving's may have surpassed it in grandeur, Kean's in raging force, but Macklin's will endure for all time as "The Jew, that Shakespeare drew."

Shylock was such an outstanding success that one is apt to forget how good Macklin was in many other characters—and he is sometimes regarded as a one-part actor. But he was an admirable *Iago*, and a magnificent comedian in grim parts. *Sir Pertinax McSycophant*, in his own play of "*The Man of the World*," was a very fine performance.

His *Macbeth* was not given a fair chance, but one cannot imagine him in the character, or the character in him. He was an admirable elocutionist and a first-rate teacher, and this was all the more creditable considering the trouble he had with a brogue, at one time as pronounced as his features.

As an author he wrote two plays, "*Love à la Mode*" and "*The Man of the World*," that earned a place in the traffic of the stage for many years. In addition, he wrote many pamphlets and lectures, generally very highly coloured with his own opinions. He was a good, sound critic when not swayed by personal animosity. He affected to be unable to see any merit at all, but bustle, in Garrick, which was ridiculous. But, with all his faults, he was a great actor and a wonderful personality, and a man with a genuine love for his art and its great mission.

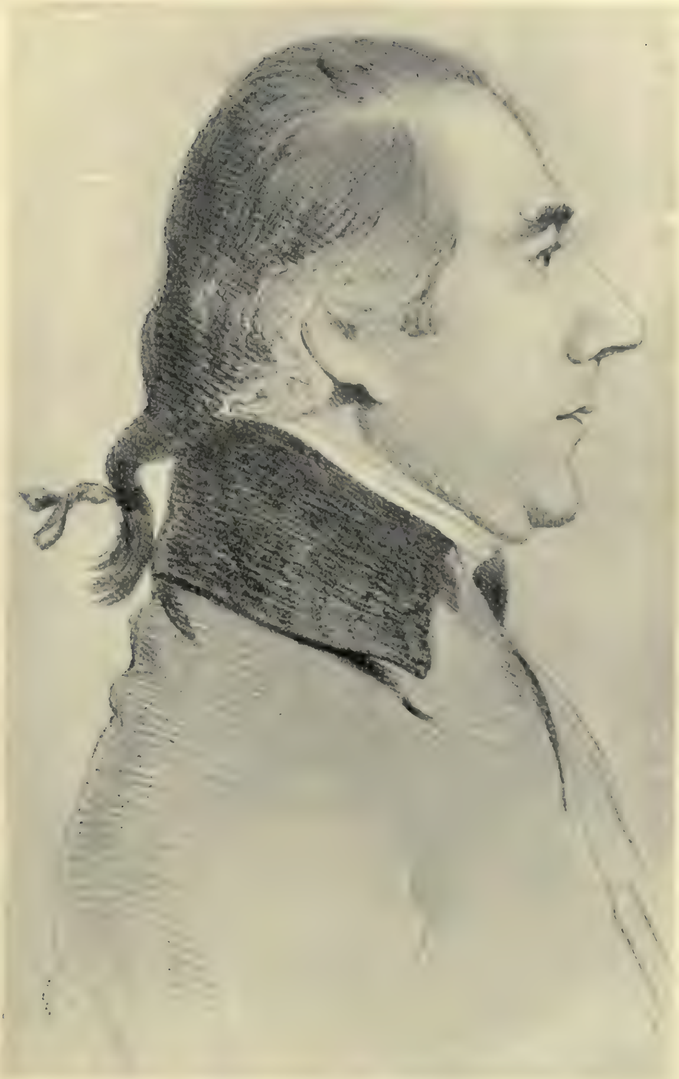
JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN

1758–1832

JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN, commonly known as Joe Munden, was born in Brook's Market, Leather Lane, Holborn, early in the year 1758.

Though a small street it could boast of being the last scene of a tragedy and the first of a comedy, for the remains of the unhappy poet Chatterton lie buried there. Munden's father was a poulterer, and the future comedian was at the age of twelve apprenticed to an apothecary, or at any rate worked as an assistant in his shop. But unexpected talent was forthcoming in the shape of an extraordinarily fine handwriting, in both senses of the word. So Joe was apprenticed to a Mr. Druce, a law stationer in Chancery Lane. Chancery Lane is not far from Drury Lane Theatre, and it was not long before Joey found himself witnessing the performances of the great Garrick. It soon became quite an everyday occurrence for him to climb out of the window in his father's house and go off to see his idol. From worshipping the master, he fell a-worshipping his art, and he would often run away from home and join himself to some band of strollers.

His mother soon got to know of his haunts, and would go after him and bring him back. Her plan was to take her place among the audience, and when



JOSEPH SHEPHERD MUNDEN.

Joey made his appearance jump on the stage and carry him off there and then. As Joey was a very respectable boy his clothes often appeared before he did, being requisitioned by other members of the company who happened to be on the stage whilst he was off. Then Mrs. Munden would make for the wings and capture her son in the act of changing.

However, one day he got clear away, and as far afield as Liverpool, where, owing to his skill in penmanship, he got a job in the town clerk's office at 10s. 6d. a week. This he augmented by various appearances in small parts and as an extra gentleman at the theatre, at eighteenpence a performance, even extending his operations as far as Rochdale, where he stayed with some relations. He also made friends with Shuter the actor. Finally, he left the town clerk's office at Liverpool and made his way, with a guinea in his pocket, to Chester, where he spent his last shilling in a ticket for the theatre, of which he afterwards became the proprietor. It is related that on leaving the theatre he registered a vow that he would one day be its manager, but it is more than probable that the event begat the prophecy! He now experienced many hardships, earning his bread alternately by his acting and writing ability, tramping from town to town, until he eventually found himself at Leatherhead, in Surrey, where he was engaged to play old men and character parts in a strolling company of barn-stormers. Their theatre actually was a barn, which for the first two nights was absolutely empty, but on the third a gentleman in the neighbourhood bespoke a command performance, which was so well attended that, on a division of profits, each actor found himself with six shillings and two pieces of candle!

The barn was eventually burnt down, the fate of most barn theatres. Munden's penmanship again came in useful; he wrote a petition to the neighbourhood in his best style, which brought in nearly thirty pounds.

The manager paid each member of his company five shillings, and then decamped. Munden then found engagements at Wallingford, Windsor, and Colnbrook, where he was again left on his beam ends by a decamping manager, so he played the prodigal son and returned to his father, to be received with open arms; and the fatted calf, in this case probably a turkey, was killed.

But he could no more refrain from acting than from breathing, and he soon found himself taking part in private performances at the Haymarket Theatre. There Hurst, the manager of the Canterbury Theatre, saw him, and offered him an engagement. This was in 1780, and may be said to mark the commencement of his regular career as an actor. And it was, on the whole, extraordinarily regular, excepting in the early part. His professional way lay on very even and pleasant lines, and he went from success to success until he achieved the position of the leading comedian of his day, and perhaps the best English broad comedian of any day. His principal part at Canterbury was *Faddle* in "*The Oaks, or the Beauties of Canterbury*," by Mrs. Burgess. From Canterbury he went to Brighton, still improving his position.

Austin and Whitlock, the Chester managers, had lost their leading comedian by death, and wrote and offered Munden the post, which he accepted. He remained some months with them, playing at Chester, Whitehaven, Newcastle, Lancaster, Preston, and Manchester. If this hard work, good conduct, and real ability did not raise him much in salary, it rose him very high in the estimation of his employers and his audiences, and a gentleman came forward and offered to advance him the money to buy Austin's share in the circuit. Austin was meditating retiring. Munden borrowed the money, bought the share and repaid his benefactor, not only in cash, but in the successful career with which he justified the outlay. The theatres of the circuit of which he was now joint manager were at Chester, Newcastle, Lancaster, Preston, Warrington, and Sheffield. The principal tragedian of the company was no other than the great George Frederick Cooke, whose splendid powers had not yet begun to be ruined by his manner of living. The tragic heroine was Mrs. Whitlock, a sister of Mrs. Siddons, who seems to have resembled her in everything but talent. The second comedian was Joe Austin, who had played with and been a personal friend of Garrick's. Mrs. Hun, the mother of George Canning, the statesman, was another member of the company, and there were two other young ladies, Miss Mary Jones and Miss Frances Butler, whose lives were to be closely intertwined with Munden's. Munden had carried on a liaison with Mary Jones for some time. When he became a manager, he foolishly settled down with her at Chester, introducing her everywhere as his wife. By her he had four daughters. In 1789, after they had been living together nearly nine years, she bolted for Bath with an actor named Hodgekinson, taking with her thirty pounds belonging to Munden, and also taking his daughter Esther. The couple were married at Bath, and separated at Bristol a few weeks afterwards, Hodgekinson bolting again, this time for America, with a lady named Brett.

Hodgekinson coolly wrote to Munden, asking him to take care of the children. Mrs. Hodgekinson had been delivered of a son, Valentine Joseph, a few days after her wedding!

This incident, when it became known, did not improve Munden's reputation at Chester, and he hastened to whitewash himself by marrying Miss Frances Butler, a lady of good connections and some talent as an actress. Thus he was, so to speak, "made honest" in the eyes of Chester. To do him justice, his life was thenceforward most regular. He was a good husband and a good father to his legitimate and his illegitimate children. Soon after his marriage Mrs. Hodgekinson died, her last moments rendered comfortable and happy as could be by both Mr. and Mrs. Munden, who took care of her two children and had them brought up and educated with their own. They had two boys of their own, one of whom died in infancy, and the other lived to be his father's biographer.

Munden now remained at Chester, acting, touring, superintending his theatres, and adding very materially to his fortune, until 1790, when the death of the great comedian John Edwin caused a bad gap in the Covent Garden company. At the suggestion of an old colleague, called Miss Chapman, with whom Const, a shareholder in Covent Garden, was "keeping company," Munden was appealed to, and undertook to fill the aching void at £8 a week. He sold his share in the Chester circuit to Stephen Kemble, and came up to London with his wife. He took lodgings in Portugal Street, Clare Market, but his kind friend Miss Chapman again used her influence, and made him move to more respectable quarters in Catherine Street, Strand.

Munden boldly made his first appearance at Covent Garden in two of the late Edwin's best parts, namely, *Sir Francis Gripe* in "*The Busy Body*," and *Jemmy Jumps* in "*The Farmer*." On the whole his reception was extraordinarily favourable. Public and critics were alike loud in their applause, and there was only one carper, who complained that Munden was "neither the quick nor the dead," an allusion to Quick and Edwin. But this carper was only Anthony Pasquin, alias John Williams, who never did anything but carp!

With the exception of one or two appearances at the Haymarket and an occasional tour, Munden now remained at Covent Garden for twenty-one years, gradually climbing up the tree, till he was regarded as without a rival in his own line, and when the theatre lost Quick and its other comedians, automatically succeeding to all the best comedy parts. To attempt to enumerate a twentieth part of the characters he played would take up too much space, and only be a confusing list of names to the reader. But some of the characters conveying something more than their mere names were as follows: *Dogberry*, *Dromio of Syracuse*, *Launcelot Gobbo*, *Launce* in the "*Two Gentlemen of Verona*." As *Launce* Munden's own dog Cæsar appeared with him, and so far entered into his part as to bite the leg of another performer, who was supposed to be ill-treating Cæsar's master! *Malvolio*, *Sir Anthony Absolute*, *Sir Peter Teazle*, *Sir Fretful Plagiary* and *Tony Lumpkin*. In plays less known to this generation: *The Don Jerome* in the "*Duenna*," *Peachum* in the "*Beggars' Opera*," *Scrub* in "*The Beaux' Stratagem*," *Brainworm* in "*Every Man in His Humour*," *Marrall* in "*A New Way to pay Old Debts*," *Sir Abel Handy* in

Morton's "*Speed the Plough*," and *Dornton* in Holcroft's "*Road to Ruin*," a character that remained a favourite till the end of his life, and that will be for ever associated with his name. At the Haymarket, in 1797, he created *Zekiel Homespun* in Colman's "*Heir-at-Law*."

In the year 1800, in March, Munden's signature appeared with that of seven other actors to a letter to the papers complaining of the theatrical monopoly in London, under which they were compelled to accede to unfair provisions in their contracts, and impugning Harris, the manager of Covent Garden. Many of the Drury Lane company sympathized with "the rebellious eight," as they were called, and gave them a dinner at the "Garrick's Head." King also, who had retired and was known as the Father of the Stage, publicly sympathized with them. The matter was referred for arbitration to Lord Salisbury, who decided against the actors on every point. The principal grounds of complaint seem to have been the increase of the benefit "charges," and the stoppage of salary on any night when an actor was too ill to play. For the last clause the actors had only themselves to blame. Before it existed "sicknesses," either entirely imaginary or brought on by quite avoidable causes, were alarmingly frequent. But such a clause was never necessary under Garrick's management, which speaks much for his hold over his company. In 1811 Munden quarrelled with the Covent Garden management, somewhat unreasonably it must be admitted, for he claimed his full salary for many weeks during which he had not played at all, principally owing to the gout. Moreover, he quarrelled with them over his benefit charges, and, at the time of the O.P. riots, had been known to raise his voice, rather unwisely, on the side of the rioters. So he left the theatre and vowed never to set foot in it again, which he did not do, except to play at a benefit.

He migrated to the Haymarket, where he opened with "*Old Dornton*," and then appeared as *Casimere* in a play adapted by Colman from Canning, and rejoicing in the ridiculous name of "*The Quadrupeds of Quedlinbrough*." This was followed by two prolonged country tours, in which he visited all his old haunts and also Edinburgh, where he was presented to Sir Walter Scott. The great author complimented him upon his wonderful performance of an old blind general in a now-forgotten play. "That you can convey so much, without the use of the actor's most effective adjuncts, the eyes, is wonderful to me," said Scott. During this tour Munden began to amass large sums of money, and gave signs of the stinginess which afterwards became downright miserliness.

He now signed an agreement with Drury Lane, where he appeared for the first time—4th October, 1813—as *Sir Abel Hardy* in "*Speed the Plough*." The appearance of Edmund Kean as *Shylock* on 26th January, 1814, set London in a blaze and tragedy in fashion again. Whilst that wonderful first night was in progress, Munden was sitting comfortably in his home at Kentish Town, when his son, who had been to see Kean's first appearance, burst into the room in a frantic state of excitement, with the news that a new era in tragic acting had begun. Old Munden simply smiled and said, "When you have seen as many stars rise and fall as I have, you will not so hastily pronounce an opinion." And it was a very long time before the old comedian could be got to acknowledge the new tragedian's merit. When he finally did so, it was forced from him unwittingly and irresistibly. "My God! My God! Is it possible!" said Munden, as, half paralysed with terror and amazement, he was dragged off the stage by the arm-pits, after Kean's terrible performance of *Sir Giles Overreach.* Munden had supported him as *Marrall.* Henceforward, the mere mention of Kean's name would cause his face to become grave and thoughtful, as though some terrible occasion had left an undying impress on his mind.

On 11th March, 1815, he created *Dozey*, the old sailor in Dibdin's "*Past Ten O'clock and a Rainy Night.*" This was one of his greatest and most popular creations. It represented an old, half-drunken sailor, and had a wonderful description of a sea-fight.

No pen could describe such a performance from hearsay, and none but that of a comedian could do it at first hand. Fortunately such a pen was at hand and has preserved the picture for us. The following is "Elia's" description:—

"Old Dozey is a plant from Greenwich. The bronzed face—and neck to match—the long curtain of a coat—the straggling white hair—the propensity, the determined attachment to grog, are all from Greenwich. Munden, as *Dozey*, never seems to have been out of action, sun, and drink. He looks fire-proof. His face and throat were dried like a raisin—and his legs walked under the rum and water with all the indecision which that inestimable beverage usually inspires. It is truly tacking, not walking. He *steers* at a table, and the tide of grog now and then bears him off a point. On this night he seemed to us to be doomed to fall in action [referring to his last performance—ED.], and we therefore looked at him, as some of the *Victory's* crew are said to have gazed upon Nelson, with a consciousness that his ardour and his uniform were worn for the last time. In the scene where Dozey describes a sea-fight, the actor never was greater, and he seemed the personification of an old seventy-four! His coat hung like a flag at his poop! His phiz was not a whit less highly coloured than one of those lustrous visages that generally superintend the head of a ship! There was something cumbrous, indecisive, and awful in his veerings! Once afloat, it seemed impossible for him to come to his moorings; once at anchor, it did not seem an easy thing to get him under weigh."—"London Magazine," May, 1824.

As *Old Dozey*, preceded by *Sir Robert Bramble* in "*The Poor Gentleman*," Munden took his farewell of the stage on 31st May, 1824.

He had an enormous house, and recited a farewell address. The next day the papers were full of the event, and his great champion, Charles Lamb, took care that it was properly appreciated, and wrote a very serious letter to the "Athenæum" on the subject. At least, serious for him, if not for the "Athenæum." The eight years following Munden's retirement were not very happy ones. His gout and his money combined to make life not worth living. He developed into a thoroughgoing miser. He had a large sum of money invested in Government securities, but dissatisfied with the rate of interest he sold out and reinvested in, amongst other fatal concerns, house property. They were poor houses situated in Islington. Either they or their rents were always coming down, and Munden had the doubtful satisfaction of putting up the houses, but not the rents.

But he would never consent to reappear on the stage, though he might have improved his financial position by doing so. In any case, that was quite secure, and his losses were only trifling. He was generally confined to his house at Kentish Town. Later he removed to Bernard Street, Russell Square, where he died. Sometimes he would pay a visit to the country to a favourite daughter; but she died, and her death broke up the old man. He followed her to the grave 6th February, 1832, and was buried in St. George's Church, Bloomsbury. To the last he was nursed by his devoted wife, who was some years older than he, and suffered much from real privations brought on through his penuriousness, which continued after his death, for he only left her the trifling annuity of a hundred pounds.

In character Munden was a regular specimen of the old school, and very much like many of the characters he portrayed so well. Crusty, cantankerous, comic, convivial, and companionable! The type of self-indulgent, selfish old wine-bibber and gourmand who is generally described as a "jolly good sort." A joke and a wheeze for everybody and anybody so long as they kept off his corns! Though near in money matters, he was perfectly straight, with the stolid, plum-pudding sort of honesty often described as typically English. He probably hated Whigs and heretics without having the haziest notion what they were.

His morals, once the preliminary wobble was over, were as steady as his income and his art. He was quite happy in his chimney-corner, though it may be doubted if his wife was. He had several children on either side of the marriage rubicon, and of the survivors, a legitimate son, Thomas Shepherd Munden, afterwards wrote his father's biography, and an excellent little biography it is.

As a comedian Munden was inimitable. Rich, ripe, broad, with marvellous powers of facial expression. Critics were divided in their opinion as to what class his merits belonged. The majority considered him a caricaturist, a grimacer, a buffoon. But Lamb and Talfourd considered him to be comedy, the comedy of nature, impersonated. Talfourd said that his "wonder-working face . . . looks as if the picture were carved out from a rock by Nature in a sportive vein, and might last for ever." Presumably the expressions changed as the face of a cliff does, when seen from a passing ship! He dressed his characters extraordinarily well and carefully, sometimes paying as much as £40 for a single costume, which shows that his art came even before his purse. As an actor, pure and simple, Munden was probably one of the most convincing that ever trod the stage. But, of course, it is easier to be convincing in comedy than tragedy. Most of us have experienced comedy in some form or other, but how many have experienced, witnessed, or realized real tragedy.

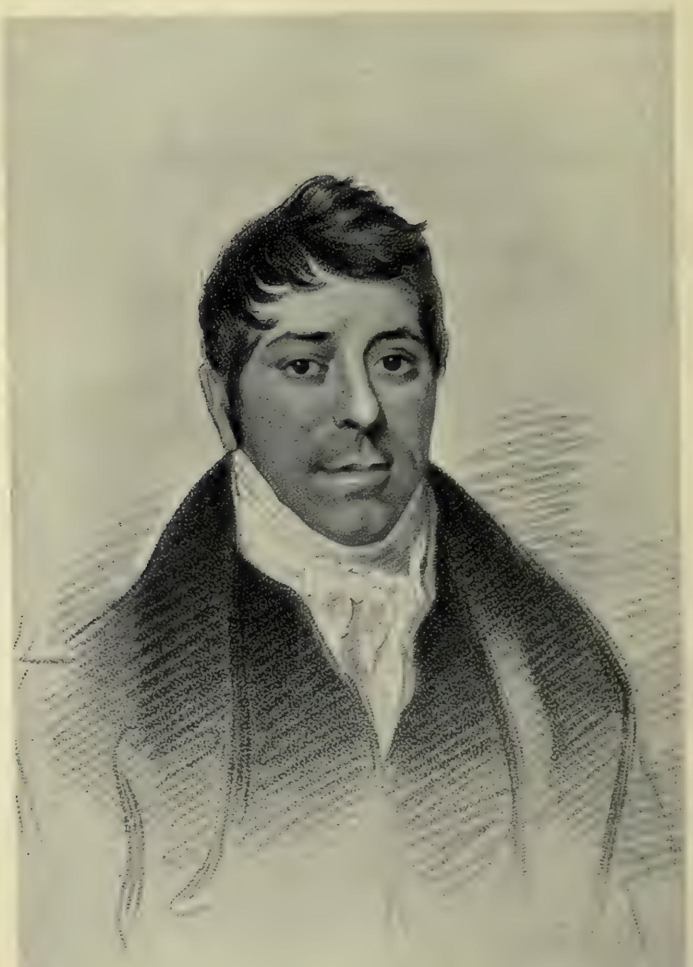
Munden was at his very best on the stage, and when his face was lighted up with comedy. Off the stage and in repose his face, especially his profile, says Leigh Hunt, was not good. "There was something close, carking, even severe in it; but it was redeemed by his front face, which was handsome for one so old, and singularly pliable about the eyes and brows." On the whole, Munden's face seems to have reflected his character very faithfully.

Take him for all in all he was a grand old actor, and we cannot conclude better than by again studying Charles Lamb's description of him and his acting.

"There is one face of Farley, one of Knight, one (but what a one it is!) of Liston; but Munden has none that you can properly pin down, and call *his*. When you think he has exhausted his battery of looks, in unaccountable warfare with your gravity, suddenly he sprouts out an entirely new set of features, like Hydra. He is not one, but legion. Not so much a comedian as a company. If his name could be multiplied like his countenance, it might fill a play-bill. He, and he alone, literally *makes faces:* applied to any other person the phrase is a mere figure, denoting certain modifications of the human countenance. Out of some invisible wardrobe he dips for faces, as his friend Suett used for wigs, and fetches them out as easily. . . .

"I have seen this gifted actor in *Sir Christopher Curry*—in "*Old Dornton*"—diffuse a glow of sentiment which has made the pulse of a crowded theatre beat like that of one man; when he has come in aid of the pulpit, doing good to the moral heart of a people. I have seen some faint approaches to this sort of excellence in other players. But in the grand grotesque of farce, Munden stands out as single and unaccompanied as Hogarth. Hogarth, strange to tell, had no followers. The school of Munden began, and must end, with himself."

Such was Munden according to one of the greatest English critics of comedy, and such was English comic acting in its palmiest day.



JOSEPH GRIMALDI.

JOSEPH GRIMALDI

1779-1837

JOSEPH GRIMALDI, commonly known as "Joey," was born in Stanhope Street, Clare Market, on 18th December, 1779. His father and grandfather were clowns and dancers before him, and his mother, too, was a dancer. His father, Giuseppi Grimaldi, had come to London from Italy and France in 1758, and eventually found himself at Sadler's Wells, with which theatre his family were to be associated for so many years. At the time of the Gordon riots old Grimaldi distinguished and protected himself by writing up "No religion" instead of "No Popery" upon his door.

Little Joey had not been long in this world before being made to become a useful and paying member of it. On 16th April, 1781, he made his first authenticated appearance on the stage, at Sadler's Wells, as a monkey, though there is some evidence of his having appeared previously to this, when a little over a year old, as a baby clown in "*Robinson Crusoe*." He was so successful at Sadler's Wells that he was very soon engaged to appear in pantomime at Drury Lane. He doubled the two engagements, running from one theatre to the other, working very hard, and earning the wages of a man long before the age at which most boys have begun even to think of schooling. When, after the pantomime season was over, the time came for Joey to think of his schooling, he was sent to a school at Putney kept by a Mr. Ford, of whose kindness he spoke much in after years. Amongst his schoolfellows was Henry Harris, afterwards his manager at Covent Garden.

His boyhood, according to his "Memoirs," edited, from his own autobiography, by the immortal "Boz," was very industrious and hard-worked, and spiced with many adventures such as might be expected to happen to a boy clown. Once when, as a monkey, he had to be swung round on the end of a rope, the rope broke, and he was flung into the pit. When a very small urchin indeed, he was in the habit of spending his Sunday afternoons at his maternal grandfather's in Newton Street, Holborn. On these occasions he was fearfully and wonderfully "got up" by his parents, and would swagger forth in silk stockings, knee-breeches, fancy waistcoat of flowered silk, beautiful lace ruffs, brilliant paste buckles, a cocked hat, a jewelled (stage jewels) watch in his fob, and a little jewelled swagger cane in his hand. He would then swagger through the streets affecting to be sublimely unconscious of the grinning, gaping crowd of small boys who would follow him and call him by name. Probably even at that early age Master Joey fully appreciated the value of such publicity. On one of these occasions his father gave him a guinea, not to spend, but to complete the character. With a guinea in his pocket he was a thorough gentleman! So off Joey set, and sustained the character more completely than his father had bargained for. He had not gone far when he met a poor woman with a piteous tale of woe. With a fine air of lordly generosity and detachment Joey gave her his guinea. When asked to produce it on his return home he fell upon his knees and confessed all to the irate parent, who was not so irate as he had expected. The deed was one after his father's own heart, and Joey considered himself lucky to get off with nothing worse than a sound thrashing!

Joey's walk to see his grandfather is delightfully pictured by Cruikshank in Boz's "Memoirs." The little fellow's inimitable bearing and quaint appearance are deliciously rendered. On the whole, Joey was a very good boy, and a very steady boy, with more than the usual share of patience and perseverance, and an odd passion for collecting flies, of which he amassed over four thousand varieties, all beautifully set up in glass cases. In making and mounting his collection he showed unwearied patience and unwearying energy, often going far away into the country after the performance at night to pursue his hobby. On one occasion he made, mounted, and set a small collection, which he presented to Mrs. Jordan as a token of respectful and chivalrous admiration. She was touched by this genuine compliment, and told Joey that she had taken them home and shown them to her husband, His Royal Highness the Duke of Clarence, who remarked that he considered the flies equal, if not superior, to any of the kind he had ever seen!

In later years this collection was ruthlessly and wantonly destroyed by burglars, and Joey took to breeding pigeons instead.

In 1798 he married Maria Hughes, the eldest daughter of one of the proprietors of Sadler's Wells. Joey's courtship was long and anxious. He had very grave fears on account of the difference in social status between himself and the daughter of his employer. But the esteem in which he was held and the excellence of his private character won the day, and Mr. Hughes gladly and readily gave his consent, and Joey and Maria became one. But their happiness was short-lived, for the following year Maria died ere her child was born, and Joey's heart was broken. With her last breath Maria asked her brother Richard to "take care of poor Joe," which he did until his death in 1812, being always Joey's wisest friend and counsellor. In 1799 Joe's heart was handsomely patched and he married again, a Miss Bristow, an actress at Drury Lane, who had nursed him very attentively during a severe illness caused by the accidental discharge of a pistol in his top-boot. The trigger of the pistol caught in the tag of the boot, the audience laughed heartily, thinking it was a good joke, whilst Grimaldi continued playing his part in excruciating agony, for the inside of the boot was on fire. This accident confined him to his bed for a month. Grimaldi's second marriage turned out very successful, and he and his wife lived happily together until her death in 1835, two years before his own. Joey was thoroughly domestic, required a lot of looking after, and was just the sort of man who could not possibly get on without a wife. Poor fellow, he had two opportunities to prove it.

In 1803 a painful and startling incident disturbed the even tenour of his way. His brother, John Baptist, who had gone to sea some years previously and not been seen since, suddenly turned up at the theatre. Joey did not recognize him at first. When the brother did reveal himself, he revealed something else also, namely £700 in wages and prize-money, which he carried in currency, in a bag inside his "jumper." It was arranged that after the theatre the two should go home together, and that John Baptist while on shore should live with Joey, his wife, and his mother. Joey went upstairs to dress, whilst his brother waited below in the green-room. When Joey came down his brother was no longer there, and the stage-door keeper said he had seen him leave the theatre. Joey at once went in search, but from that moment his brother was never seen or heard of again. He had arrived at the theatre in company with a stranger, who had quietly taken his leave when the two brothers had become re-united. The stranger was never seen or traced either, and it was suspected that he, knowing of the £700 John Baptist was carrying about with him, had, possibly with the help of some accomplices, murdered him and succeeded in safely disposing of the body and the booty. Inquiries were set on foot and the search kept up for months, even years, but with no result. Grimaldi continued to work steadily at his calling, making a good income, and some large sums of money whenever and wherever he chose to appear in the provinces. He was fond of a country life and had a cottage out at Finchley, whither he would drive in a pony-trap "after the show" at nights. He had a good horse, who needed no driving, and often Grimaldi would fall asleep in the cart, to be finally wakened up by the stopping of the cart, or by his servant, who was always waiting for him at the gate with a lantern. On more than one occasion the servant followed the master's example, and the good horse would browse quietly by the roadside whilst the master slept in the cart and the servant at the gate. On another occasion Grimaldi was attacked by highwaymen, amongst whom he thought he detected a personal friend. The next day, when he went to Bow Street to identify some men who had been arrested on suspicion, he found his friend amongst them, but with characteristic generosity did not give him away. He had recognized him the night before, in spite of his mask, owing to his wanting one of the fingers of his left hand, and his habit of bending the next one to make the gap look natural.

Grimaldi's kindness certainly converted this man from the error of his ways, for he lived for many years afterwards a respected citizen in Islington. On Grimaldi's benefit days a strange person would call at his house, always at a time when he happened to be out, and purchase ten tickets. One day Grimaldi asked his servant what the stranger was like.

"Oh!" said she. "'E's all right, ony 'e's lost two fingers on 'is left 'and!!"

According to the Memoirs he was more than once mixed up with thieves, but not always during their professional hours. As the Memoirs are edited by none other than Charles Dickens, we may be sure the stories have some foundation, and at the same time that they have lost nothing in the telling. On one occasion an acquaintance, called Mackintosh, whom he knew but slightly, and with little desire for closer acquaintance, asked Grimaldi if he would sup with him at a friend's house where a large party would be proud of the honour of meeting him. Grimaldi accepted, and his host took him to a house in the neighbourhood of Fitzroy Square, where he was conducted into a large and magnificently appointed room, and presented to no less than six pairs of husbands and wives. The supper-party passed off splendidly, and in the matter of entertainment Grimaldi gave at least as good as he got. His hosts were so pleased that he was soon invited again. In fact, he got into the habit of going there, sometimes taking his wife with him. At other times some of his curious acquaintances would visit him. But there was an air of mystery about the whole business that he did not like.

Then one day it was cleared up. Mackintosh was "wanted" in connection with a burglary up north, and his only way out of escape was to prove an alibi, a thing he could quite legitimately do, if Grimaldi, in whose company he had been on the night of the burglary, would come forward. Grimaldi readily did so, and his friend was discharged. It then transpired that all the members of these wonderful gatherings were "professional" gentlemen and ladies, living "on the cross," and no more married than honest.

Poor Joe was terrified of the consequences of this revelation, but his good character sustained him through, and after, the ordeal without harm to his reputation.

In 1805 Grimaldi quarrelled with Drury Lane, left the theatre and went on tour to Dublin, where he acted under the management of his friends Thomas and Charles Dibdin, first at Astley's and afterwards at the Crow Street Theatre. They migrated from one theatre to the other chiefly on account of the wet weather, when the rain came into the theatre and drove out the audience!

On his return to London, in 1806, Grimaldi made his first appearance at Covent Garden as *Orson* in Thomas Dibdin's "*Valentine and Orson.*" *Orson* was quite out of his usual line and a very difficult part for him to play, but he studied hard under the able tuition of his friend Farley, and the result was a great success, and the play was acted nearly every night up till Christmas, when the pantomime of "*Mother Goose*" came on. This was one of Grimaldi's greatest successes, was played upward of a hundred nights, and often revived. Grimaldi remained at Covent Garden for some years. He was there all through the O.P. riots, and one night Kemble sent him on as *Scaramouch* in "*Don Juan*" to try and quell the riot. On his appearance in this favourite character the audience at once quieted down, and the play was allowed to proceed, to Kemble's relief and Grimaldi's huge delight. But the same experiment failed on a later occasion.

In 1816 Grimaldi's long connection with Sadler's Wells ceased, and he went on a most successful tour, making £2000 pounds in fifty-six performances. On his return he appeared with great success in "*Baron Munchausen*" at Covent Garden. In 1818 he was back at Sadler's Wells, this time as part proprietor, having purchased an eighth share in the business. In this, as in all his other speculations, he was unfortunate. The business of the theatre began to decline, and worse still his health followed suit. From now on, until 1823, when he made his last appearance at Covent Garden, it grew steadily worse, until his lower limbs were completely paralysed.

His lot was also made harder by private and domestic worries. His son, after a very successful debut in 1812, had followed in his father's footsteps, and eventually succeeded him as chief clown at Sadler's Wells. The young man had begun well, domestically as well as dramatically, and lived quietly at home with his father and mother. But now he had left the paternal roof and was openly leading a life of debauchery and dissolution, for which he was not entirely to blame, having sometimes suffered from temporary fits of insanity. He was dismissed from Covent Garden, and found a lucrative home at Drury Lane; from there he was also dismissed and migrated to the Coburg. He was continually getting jobs, on account of his cleverness, and losing them on account of his habits. Whenever he was on his beam ends he would return home to his father and mother, who always readily forgave him and nursed him back into health. He died in 1832 of delirium, at the age of thirty, and was buried in the burial-ground of Whitfield's Tabernacle.

To return to his father. After ceasing work at Covent Garden, Grimaldi found himself in serious pecuniary difficulties. His share in Sadler's Wells was bringing himself in less than nothing, and he was forced to live upon his capital. In 1825, however, he was appointed resident manager at Sadler's Wells at a salary of £4 a week. One of his duties was to cut down expenses, and the conscientious little man reduced his own salary by one half.

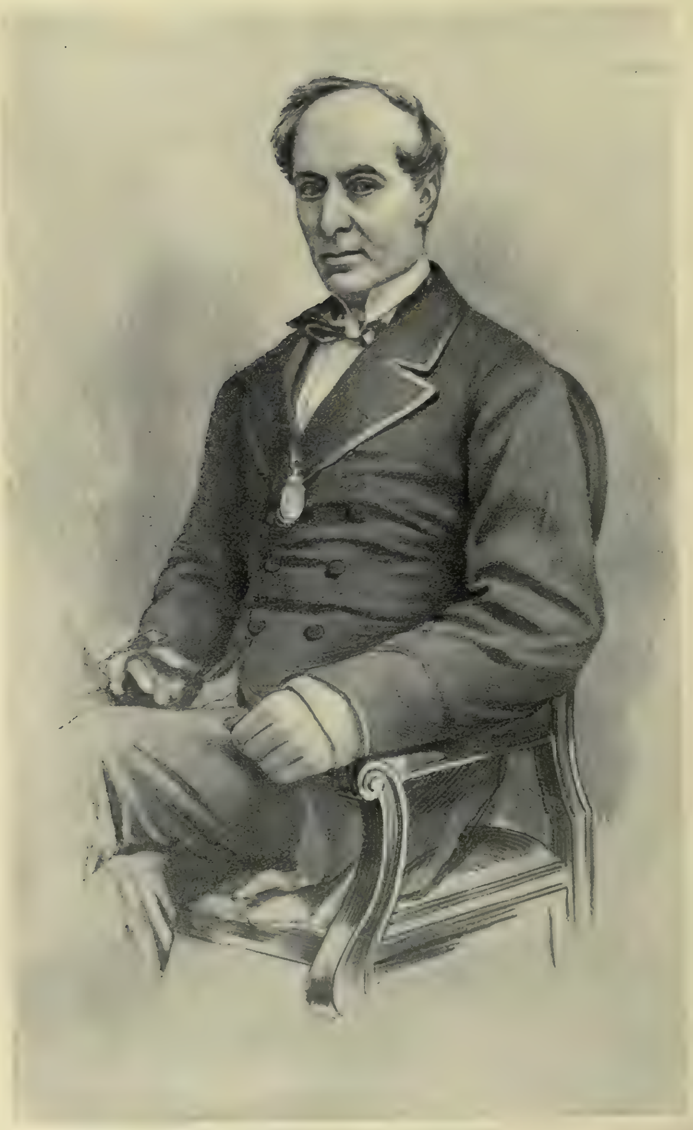
On 17th March, 1828, he took a benefit at Sadler's Well, and in the following June took a second one at Drury Lane, Covent Garden having unaccountably refused his request for one. At Drury Lane he sang his last song, and played his last part as *Harlequin Hoax*, seated in a chair. The two benefits amounted to nearly £800, which, with a small annuity granted him by the Drury Lane Theatrical Fund, kept him from want for the remainder of his days. His wife died in 1835, and he never recovered from the blow, but died on 31st May, 1837, in Southampton Street, Pentonville, in a small dwelling to which he had removed after his wife's death.

The last part of his life was as melancholy as the first had been merry, but he was somewhat cheered by the frequent visits of his old friends, and the care and tenderness with which he was nursed by an actress called Miss Kelly.

As an actor Grimaldi was not distinguished; indeed, he only played one or two parts during the whole of his career. But he was regarded as the last and greatest of the clowns. His power of facial expression and grimace are said to have been irresistibly mirth-provoking. According to Cruikshank they certainly are. He could sing "Hot Codlins" and "Tippety Witchet" like no one else. He was a genuine grotesque, depending upon drollery, and not trickery, for his effects. The ideal clown, the genuine pantomime droll, is said to have been invented by him and to have died with him. He never had an equal and never a successor. He was, in his way, a genius. To establish a tradition is often a sign of genius, and Grimaldi certainly did that.

In character he was sober, simple, unsophisticated, and melancholy—the traditional temperament of the humorist. He was somewhat easily imposed upon, but he had plenty of common sense, and was not often taken in twice.

He was most unfortunate in money matters, and lost through poor speculations much of the money, amounting to many thousands of pounds, that he made during his tours. His private life, as we have said, was the ideal private life of a clown, crowded with strange and weird adventures, if his Memoirs are to be believed, and they are probably founded on fact. Few actors have achieved the immortality of Grimaldi. Joey has become the traditional name of the clown. As far as it can be traced he was the original poor funny man who went to see a doctor for melancholia, and was recommended to go and see himself! And last, but not least, he was the originator of the immortal phrase, "HERE WE ARE AGAIN!"



CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS.

CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS

1803–1878

CHARLES JAMES MATHEWS, probably the finest light comedian this or any other country has ever produced, was born in Basnett Street, Liverpool, on 26th December, 1803. His father, Charles Mathews, sen., was a great comedian before him and a wonderful mimic, so wonderful that all public persons, from statesmen to pickpockets, were heartily afraid of him. It was said of him that when he imitated characters he not only copied their outward man, but seemed to take upon himself, for the time being, their own mental individuality. It was also said that if he had been born a few years earlier and joined his powers of mimicry to those of Foote and Tate Wilkinson, the three actors would have driven Garrick to desperation and death, just as three actresses drove him from the stage. The elder Mathews was shy and retiring in private life, with studious and artistic habits. At his house, Ivy Lodge, in Kentish Town, he had a good library and a wonderful collection of theatrical pictures, now the property of the Garrick Club. They were housed, at Ivy Lodge, in a gallery built and designed by the hero of this paper, who was born at Liverpool whilst his father was on tour, and christened shortly afterwards at York. He had plenty of variety in his school days, as he went first to a private school at Hackney, then in Fulham, then to Merchant Taylors', and finally to a private school in Clapham, kept by the gentle Dr. Richardson, of dictionary fame, and Charles James assisted in the compilation of the Dictionary. At this early age he evinced no particular fondness or capacity for the stage, but he had a genuine love for drawing and mathematics, and as an architect he saw possibilities of combining the two, so he was accordingly articled to Pugin, the famous architect. There he worked very hard, did many drawings which were subsequently exhibited at the Academy and elsewhere, and made friends with some of the distinguished frequenters of Pugin's studio. Byron, Scott, Lamb, Coleridge, and Campbell, were all amongst them. He had a very good time in the office, often varied with pleasant sketching tours into the country and cathedral towns, with Pugin. These were followed by a more extended tour, to Paris, where he saw some of the greatest French actors, including Talma and Mademoiselle Mars. The visit awoke in him his latent love of the stage, but it was not yet so strong as his love for his other pursuits, and he continued with Pugin. But on his return to London he took part in an amateur performance at the Lyceum Theatre, on 26th April, 1822, playing in a French play called "*Le Comédien d'Etampes*," and an English one called "*The Sorrows of Werther*." In the former he acted under the name of M. Perlet, a well-known French actor, of whom he gave such a wonderful imitation that a friend of Perlet's who was present was with difficulty persuaded that he was not the original. In "*The Sorrows of Werther*" he played the somewhat melancholy name-part under his own name. His mother took part in the performance also, and his own performance was so excellent that his father, departing from the usual custom of parents, tried hard to persuade him to adopt the stage as a profession. But he refused, and stuck to his architecture, which brought him in touch with Lord Blessington, chiefly famous for the beauty of his wife. Lord Blessington had an idea of building himself a worthy country house at Mountjoy Forest, Co. Tyrone, and Mathews went over to draw up plans on the spot. The plans never even matured as far as the completion of beautiful entrance gates and a lodge, often the first, last, and only result of "Castles in Ireland." But Mathews had a very good and typically Irish time, hunting, fishing, and riding. Lord Blessington took such a fancy to him, that he insisted upon his accompanying the family to Naples. There at the Palazzo Belvedere, in addition to Lord and Lady Blessington, the party included Lady Blessington's sister Miss Power, and Count D'Orsay. The latter, then quite a young fellow of twenty, once fell out with Mathews and coolly reminded him of the difference in their stations. Mathews promptly and pluckily challenged him to a duel, which was only averted by the Count's apologizing, which he did in a characteristically warm-hearted and generous fashion, and honour was satisfied! Mathews remained at Naples for a year, making himself immensely popular amongst the English colony, and all the fashion of that little world, by his brilliant spirits and conversational powers, and his wonderful imitations of Italian life and character. One of his most successful was that of a mendicant friar, who imagined himself a second Savonarola, and went about preaching death and damnation to all Naples. But his death and damnation were nothing to Mathews' when he donned the very voice, features and garb of the friar. On his return from Naples, Mathews became architect to a colliery in North Wales, for whom he did sundry buildings, which are probably still standing. He then entered, after repeated invitations, the employ of John Nash, the architect, and also opened an office for himself in Parliament Street. He now began to get into closer touch with the stage. Whilst waiting for clients he filled in his time, as many a good man has done before and since, by writing for the stage. He wrote several little farces and playlets, amongst which "*Pyramus and Thisbe*" and "*My Wife's Mother*" were two of the most popular. In April, 1827, he went for another trip to the Continent, visiting, amongst other places, Rome, Milan, Venice, and Florence. He also appeared in some private theatricals at the *palazzo* of Lord Normanby, playing principally Shakespearean clowns, including *Launcelot Gobbo* and *Falstaff*. In Milan he and his travelling companion, D'Egville, were admitted members of the Academy. In Rome, Mathews contracted malaria, he had previously had a mild attack of smallpox when in Florence, and finally arrived home at the close of 1830, a physical wreck, supporting himself on crutches. But he soon recovered, and resumed the rôle of Prince Charming and Amusing, staying about in the country houses of the great and doing no more work than he could help. But a change was coming over his affairs, and the turning-point of his life approaching. He had already begun to feel a few qualms at his dilettante existence, and taken the usual initial step out of it by getting some regular work (not too much of it) at a regular salary. He got together a huge collection of credentials and testimonials, and threw them at the heads of the Lord Mayor and Corporation, with the result that he was offered the district surveyorship of Bow, where his principal duties, according to his own account, was to measure chimney-pots and clean out sewers.

He now got a further impulse in the direction where he could make most money, by the failure of his father. Old Charles Mathews had had business losses, got into debt, and gone on a tour to America to recoup, but the tour was a failure, and things had gone from bad to worse. He then returned to England and broke down and died within three months, and young Charles was left to fend for himself and his mother. His thoughts naturally turned towards the stage, where he would be most likely to get immediate returns for his labours. He determined to begin by management, and took the Adelphi Theatre in partnership with Frederick Yates. He opened with an adaptation by himself, called "*Mandrin*," of a well-known and popular French melodrama, but the play and the speculation alike failed, and Charles Mathews at once decided to do what he ought to have done ages before, and go on the stage himself.

He made his debut at the Olympic, then under the management of Madame Vestris, on 6th November, 1835, in a farce called "*The Old and Young Stager.*" The *Old Stager* was played by Liston, the *Young Stager*, of course, by Mathews. The play was a sort of Tony and Sam Weller dialogue between a coachman and a groom, eminently adapted to its purpose. Mathews' effervescing style was the champagne of comedy, contrasted with old Liston's solid home-brewed ale. "*The Old and Young Stager*" was followed by "*The Humpbacked Lover*," a play written by Mathews himself, in which he played the *jeune premier*. The performance was a huge success, and Mathews' position was assured.

It would take up too much time and space to attempt to give anything like a complete list of all the characters Mathews played, but as a matter of fact they were all one, and that one the favourite of everybody, himself. In the Garrick Club there are over two hundred sketches of him in all of them, but only the costumes differ. Through them all shines the sparkling brilliancy of his own individuality, and no one would have it otherwise. He now continued for two seasons with Madame Vestris, in love with his life, in love with his art, and in love with his manageress, whom he married on 18th July, 1838, at Kensington Church.

Lucia Elizabeth Vestris was by descent an Italian and by birth a Londoner. Her father was Gaetano Bartolozzi, an engraver, and son of *the* Bartolozzi; her mother the daughter of one Jansen, a dancing-master at Aix-la-Chapelle. Her first husband, Auguste Vestris, was also a dancing-master. In 1816 her husband deserted her, and she was left to fend for herself, which she did so effectively that she was enabled to start management on her own at the Olympic on 3rd January, 1831, the first manageress the English stage has known. She was a queen in what would now be called "Musical Comedy," with "one of the most luscious of low voices, large lustrous dark eyes, masses of dark hair, and an exquisite figure." Her singing of "Cherry Ripe" sent all male London beside itself with rapture, and female London the same way with envy. Such was the beautiful Madame Vestris, and Mathews deemed himself a fortunate man to have won her, as did most of his friends, though some of them disapproved his choice.

At the close of their second season Mathews and his wife accepted an offer from Price, the manager of the Park Theatre in New York, to go to America for a year upon guarantees amounting to £20,000. They decided to accept the offer, and leaving the Olympic in what they fondly believed were safe and wise hands, they set off.

On their arrival at New York they found they had a month to spare before opening, and on the advice of their manager they repaired to Poughkeepsie, a quiet little village on the banks of the Hudson, to rest and recruit. But the heat became unbearable, and they moved on to a retreat high up in the Catskill Mountains. On arriving at their hotel they found a ball in progress and the hotel packed with revellers. After their long jolting on mule-back climbing the mountain to this retreat (!) they scarcely felt inclined to enter the ball-room forthwith, but went up to their room, where they ordered some refreshment to be brought to them. Meanwhile, it got about in the hotel that they were the "Mathooses," and they were severely criticized for what was considered to be their cavalier and unsociable conduct in not joining the party. So uncomfortable was this mountain retreat, and so overcrowded, that the "Mathooses" returned at once to Poughkeepsie, and their remained until the time came to return to New York. Arriving there, they found themselves the centre of a furious controversy which was agitating the whole city. The stories of their arrival and departure from the Catskill Hotel had been so twisted and contorted as to put quite a false construction on the whole business. They were accused of having considered themselves too good for the hotel, refused to mingle with its guests, and, furthermore, it was announced that this was not the first time that such a thing had occurred. At Saratoga Springs, where they had lately been stopping, they had not only absolutely refused to sit at table in the public room with the other guests, but had insisted that their servants should be admitted there, and the other visitors had been forced, in self-respect, to rise and leave the room in a body.

Such were the reports that were going about New York, and the city was in such a state that the manager of the theatre strongly advised Mathews not to appear, but he insisted upon braving the storm.

When the curtain rose upon the first performance the house was found to be packed entirely by men, an ominous sign. Evidently a riot unexpected. Mathews much wished to go before the curtain and make a speech explaining matters, but the management would not permit it. Had they known Mathews better they would have, for his aptitude at saying the right thing in a neat and witty way would have appealed irresistibly to an American audience, and his doubtful reception probably have been converted into an enthusiastic one. As things were it was two or three days before the prejudice was at all lifted and ladies began to appear in any numbers. From New York they went to Philadelphia, where the same process had to be repeated, and just when the city was beginning to capitulate a great financial crisis arrived and affected the theatres adversely. Mathews continued fighting the fates two or three months longer, and then threw up the sponge and decided to return to England. A farewell engagement was announced. New York was now getting thoroughly ashamed of its former attitude, and a brilliant and packed house was the result. At the close of the performance Mathews made a long and excellent speech, telling them the exact truth about the Catskill Hotel incident, and, furthermore, pointing out that there were seventeen different reasons why the Saratoga one could not be true, the first of which was that neither he nor Mrs. Mathews had ever been to that place. They then took their farewell amid a scene of wild enthusiasm, the audience doing their best to make up by the warmth of their God-speed for the coldness of their welcome. But cheers were not cash and could not make up to the Mathews for the time and money they had lost. The malicious libels alluded to not only robbed them of the expected profits of their tour, but laid the foundation of the serious troubles that were now to oppress Mathews for a long series of years, and drive his wife into the grave.

On his return to London he found the Olympic in a state of collapse. It had taken little or no nourishment at the doors during their absence, and even the large sums remitted by them from America had failed to bolster it up. They set to work boldly to work off the accumulated debts, but after playing a most successful little season, during which Mathews produced his ever-popular little farce, "*Patter versus Clatter*," they were faced with the uncomfortable fact that however successful the season, the theatre was too small for them to be able to make up the lost headway. So they accepted an advantageous offer and removed to Covent Garden.

They opened with an elaborate revival of "*Love's Labour's Lost*," upon which much money and pains were spent, but, as Mathews put it, love's labour was lost and so was an enormous sum of money. There was a riot the first night on account of the abolishing of the shilling gallery, and peace was not restored until it was announced that the gallery would be!

The next production was "*Love*," by Sheridan Knowles, in which Miss Ellen Tree made her debut, but the labour was again lost, and Mathews found himself involved in a mountain of debt from which he could not extricate himself. Duns, sheriff's officers, brokers and money-lenders appeared upon the scenes, and every Saturday six hundred and eighty-four employées had to be paid. Acting upon the advice of his solicitor, Mathews was about to wind up the whole concern and declare himself a bankrupt, when the "*Beggar's Opera*" was put up as an after-piece to "*Love*." It was an instantaneous success, which was not surprising with a cast containing such names as Harrison, Farren, Harley, and Madame Vestris. Fortune again smiled upon the theatre, and this and the following season were brilliantly successful. But alas, success only meant failure to the unfortunate proprietors, for it brought down in a cloud all the harpies who had claims upon them. The climax came in November, 1841, when Miss Adelaide Kemble appeared as *Norma* with such success that the proprietors of Covent Garden came down upon the Mathews for £14,000 arrears of rent. By their brilliant three years' management they had got the theatre into thorough working order again, and the proprietors, who ought to have known better, decided to reap where they had not sown. They confiscated the theatre to meet the arrears, and Mr. and Mrs. Mathews were left with nothing but a piece of plate presented them by the company, and a huge pile of debt amounting to £30,000.

Mathews summed up his management as follows:—

The first season . . sowing.
The second ,, . . hoeing.
The third ,, . . owing.

He was then arrested for debt and lodged in the Queen's Bench prison, where things were, through the intervention of his friends, made as comfortable for him as they could be. He was declared a bankrupt and then released. But "stone walls do not a prison make," the release was no release, the conditions of it were such that he could see no hope or possibility of ever shaking himself free from the pile of debt, and in despair he relinquished a good engagement at the Haymarket and fled to France. But things were no better there. Many of his private bills were discounted to foreign holders, who assailed him more mercilessly even than his own countrymen, so he returned to England, and again threw himself on the protection of the bankruptcy court. A new arrangement was come to and he had a little breathing space, during which he and his wife appeared at Drury Lane under Macready's management, but quarrelled with him, and migrated to the Haymarket, where they appeared in, amongst many other plays, "*The School for Scandal*," in which they played *Charles Surface* and *Lady Teazle* respectively. Mathews also created two of his favourite characters, *Giles* in Planché's "*Who's your Friend*" and *Sir Charles Coldstream* in "*Used Up*." Mathews and his wife also had a prosperous country tour, but it became more and more obvious that no possible earnings as mere actor and actress could ever extricate them from the load of debt, and they determined to try management again. The Lyceum was in the market, and they took it and for seven years made good headway, gradually reducing the pile of debt; but it did not diminish quickly enough to please all the creditors, and Mathews again found himself in the bankruptcy court. But his friends gathered round him, a subscription was raised, a benefit given, and he was presented with the lease of the Lyceum and a premium with which to commence operations. Then there was a quarrel amongst the subscribers, the balance of the subscription was never paid up, and Mathews found himself with a new debt and the lease of the Lyceum added to his other embarrassments. He decided to take a bold step. He resolutely closed the doors of the theatre, determining to risk no more, resigned management, and went into the country to earn what he could as an actor, leaving his wife behind at home, worn out and ill with the illness that was to be her last.

The final and worst indignity was now put upon him. One night he was going on at Preston when he was stopped by a sheriff's officer, with a writ for £400, and orders to execute it at the moment when the audience were assembled and Mathews about to go on the stage. Why the creditor chose a moment, not only bitterly cruel towards Mathews himself, but also ruinous to the unfortunate country manager, he himself knew, or knows, best. There was nothing for it. Mathews was forced to follow his tormentor twenty miles by train to Lancaster Castle, where he was imprisoned with a crowd of miserable wretches in a country prison, to which the Fleet would have been a palace. To make matters worse, many of his fellow-prisoners recognized him and made ribald and unfeeling jokes about "*Used Up*," "*A Game of Speculation*," and other of his plays with appropriate titles.

Bail was at once applied for by Mathews' friends, but it could not be obtained immediately, and he languished in prison for a month before obtaining his freedom. When at last he did get it he jumped into the first train he could catch and sped away from Lancaster, none too soon either, for he found out afterwards that Lancaster had intentions of showing their sympathy with him by escorting him in triumphal procession, with bands playing, to the station. As his train flew by the castle a jovial gentleman in the carriage observed to him, "That's where Charley Mathews is confined!" "Really," said a sympathetic fellow-passenger, "Poor fellow!." "Poor fellow!" said the jovial gentleman, "Not a bit of it. He revels in it. Lord bless you, he's been in every prison in England!" Mathews did not reveal himself!

He had scarcely regained his freedom ere another heavy blow descended upon him. His poor wife, Madame Vestris, whose worries had brought on an illness lasting many weary months, died on 8th August, 1856, and Mathews was left with a heavy heart to pay off the remainder of the debt by his sole efforts. For a year he played at Drury Lane, filling the position of acting-manager as well as principal comedian. Acting-management can scarcely have meant in those days all that it does now, when it would be practically impossible to combine the two offices.

Mathews now determined to try another American tour, and he set off in August, 1857. The tour opened brilliantly, and he again thought a fortune awaited him, but, alas! another national financial crisis reared its head and the theatres were again abandoned. But he did not return home empty-handed all the same; in fact, he brought back that which was, as he himself puts it, "more valuable than anything" he had counted on—"a prudent, economical, industrious little helpmate, who by two or three years of good management, with a clear little head and a good little heart, did for him what he had never been able to do for himself, i.e. kept his expenditure within his income." In short, he married again, a widow, Mrs. Davenport, with whom he had been appearing at Burton's Theatre, New York. Henceforward his way lay on much pleasanter lines, and he ceased to be continually haunted by the grim spectre debt. In addition to her other good qualities his wife was an excellent little actress, and received a warm welcome when, on his return to England, she appeared with her husband at the Haymarket as *Lady Gay Spanker* in "*London Assurance*." Henceforward Mrs. Mathews became associated with her husband in nearly all his important appearances. He remained at the Haymarket a year, winding up the engagement by appearing, for his benefit, as *Goldfinch* in the "*Road to Ruin*," and as *Paul Pry*. The performance does not seem to have been particularly successful. The Drury Lane management still had some claims upon him, however, which they exercised, and he migrated thither and appeared in an extraordinary romantic melodrama "arranged" by himself, and called "*The Pirates of the Savannah*." Neither he nor the play were a great success. It was evident, for several reasons, that Drury Lane was not the place for him.

Mathews then followed the lead of his own parents, and with his wife gave a series of entertainments in the "Bijou Theatre," the theatre within a theatre at Her Majesty's, which he called "*Mr. and Mrs. Mathews at Home*," illustrated with drawings by himself.

Later there were added "*My Wife and I*," and a burlesque by H. J. Byron entitled, "*The Sensation Fork; or, The Maiden, the Maniac, and the Midnight Murderers.*"

The entertainment was exceedingly popular in the provinces, and bid fair to be so in London, but the death of the Prince Consort had a damping effect on it. In 1863 and 1865 Mathews paid two more visits to France. During the first he played in "*Un Anglais Timide*," a French version of "*Cool as a Cucumber*," at the Théâtre des Variétés, and during the second "*L'Homme Blasé*" ("*Used Up*") at the Vaudeville. He was certainly "Un Homme Blasé" himself, and alarmed the French management considerably by his casual methods at rehearsal, when he just merely walked through his scenes, muttering his words to himself.

Nevertheless, he was "quite all right on the night," and his success delighted even the original French comedian M. Arnal, who had created the part in Paris. This was his last appearance in France, but not in French, for in July, 1867, he played "*Cool as a Cucumber*" twice in one night, first in English at the Olympic and later in French at the St. James's for Ravel's benefit. Mathews continued steadily playing, now at the Olympic, now at the St. James's, now on tour. It was when on tour at Edinburgh that he first announced the new scheme he had on hand, namely a tour round the world. No sooner was this announced than his friends, determined to give him a good send-off, arranged a public benefit and a public dinner. The former took place at Covent Garden, 4th July, 1870. Practically every actor of distinction in the profession took part in the principal item of the performance, the second act of the "*Critic*," Mathews himself, of course, playing *Puff*, and his wife *Tilburina*.

The dinner took place on the 10th at Willis's Rooms, and Mathews himself, original in this as in all things, took the chair. He made witty and excellent speeches, remarking, in proposing the toast of the Army and Navy, that "although he had never been in the army, he had been in many a mess, and as for the navy, well! he once had a narrow escape of getting into the Fleet!" His speech proposing the health of the guest of the evening was delicious. A few days after he and his wife and stepson set out on their travels. They had a very pleasant journey, with agreeable breaks by way of Nice, Egypt, and Ceylon, where they saw all the sights, and were made much fuss of. On the voyage from Suez to Ceylon Mathews treated his fellow-passengers to a performance of "*Cool as a Cucumber*" and "*Patter v. Clatter*." They arrived at Melbourne on 25th March, where they were received with the greatest pomp. One evening he paid a visit to the opera, and the whole audience rose and cheered, till he came forward in his box and bowed. He was entertained to public dinners by the Yorick and the Athenæum, two prominent clubs, whose members were all distinguished in, or lovers of, literature, science, and art. His felicitous and witty speeches won the hearts of his audience, and when on 9th April, 1870, he made his first appearance at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, in "*Patter v. Clatter*" and "*Married for Money*," his reception brought the house down. But the houses for the first few days were not as full as they might be, owing to the dissatisfaction expressed at his having raised the prices. He wrote a letter to the papers completely justifying his action, and in a very short time had overcome all prejudice by his phenomenal drawing power. Much the same thing happened at the other great Australian cities. Everywhere he went he was feasted and fêted like a royalty. He left Australia 31st January, 1871, and on 7th February gave a morning performance at 11 a.m. of "*Used Up*" and "*Cool as a Cucumber*" at Auckland, New Zealand. As it was almost midsummer in New Zealand the latter play was well chosen. At Honolulu Mathews acted for one night, by command of His Majesty Kamehameha V, King of the Sandwich Islands, to the most interesting audience that ever actor played to. Most of them paid ten shillings for their seats, and were determined to have their money's worth. The pit was mostly filled with Kanakas, till lately cannibals, "black, brown, and whitey brown, showing their white teeth, grinning, and enjoying '*Patter v. Clatter*' as much as a few years ago they would have enjoyed the roasting of a missionary or baking of a baby." Ten days later they landed at San Francisco, where Mathews received a telegram asking him to play two nights at Salt Lake City on sharing terms, but two boxes and a sufficient number of seats were to be reserved for Brigham Young, his wives and families. As the numbers were not specified Mathews did not care to take the risk! He then "crossed over" to New York, and appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre, in April, in "*Married for Money*" and "*Patter v. Clatter.*" There was no doubt about his reception this time, and it was several minutes before he could proceed with his part. He remained in New York for six weeks, and then toured in the United States and Canada.

When in Montreal he took the chair at a dinner given to celebrate the centenary of Sir Walter Scott, being asked to do so not only on account of his own distinction, but because he had been a personal friend of Scott and been entertained by him at Abbotsford. He made a deeply interesting speech, full of reminiscences and anecdotes of the great writer. Moreover, he reminded his audience, with some pride, that it was when taking the chair at a dinner in aid of a theatrical charity that Sir Walter first revealed himself in public as The Great Unknown Wizard of Waverley.

On 1st June, 1872, Mathews took his last farewell of an American audience at Wallack's Theatre, New York, as *Sir Simon Simple* in H. J. Byron's "*Not such a Fool as he Looks*."

He made his reappearance on the London stage on Monday, 7th October, 1872, at the Gaiety Theatre, under the management of John Hollingshead. Mr. Hollingshead says that "his reception was the most enthusiastic burst of feeling I ever witnessed or can imagine." He played in "*A Curious Case*" and "*The Critic*," and the engagement lasted for ten weeks, during which time he played most of his old and best parts, and showed his audience that he was still his old incomparable self. For three years he now continued to divide his attentions between the Gaiety and the country. On 13th September, 1875, he produced at the Gaiety his own adaptation of "*Un Père Prodigue*" entitled "*My Awful Dad.*" In this he created his last new part and last great success. The following November he made another trip abroad, this time to India, where he played at Calcutta before the Prince of Wales and the most gorgeous, glittering audience that any actor ever played to. Nearly all the ruling chiefs in India were there. A Maharajah sitting in every seat!

In 1876 he was back at the Gaiety, in 1877 at the Opéra-Comique, and in 1878 he set out on a tour with Miss Sarah Thorne, which was cut short on 24th June, 1878, by his death at the Queen's Hotel, Manchester, at the age of seventy-five.

No one would believe it at first. Charles Mathews dead! Nonsense, he's quite a young man! And so he was up to the very last. His wonderful vitality and freshness never deserted him on the stage, and very seldom off.

His last appearance was made at Stalybridge on 8th June in "*My Awful Dad.*" His body was removed to 59 Belgrave Road, S.W., and he was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery on the 29th.

So passed this delightful man and incomparable actor. It is almost, indeed quite, impossible to separate the one from the other, for though he played over two hundred parts, in truth they were all himself. He was Charles Mathews in everything he did. Now he would change his clothes, anon his character, but his personality was always the same—quick, delightful, effervescing, impulsive. In his own line, a somewhat limited one it is true, he was incomparable. Some will say that, being always himself, he was no actor. But it requires a great deal of acting, and acting of no mean order, to be oneself on the stage. And, Mathews would have argued, why should I not be myself, if I can see myself in the character. It is not physically impossible for me to be an *Affable Hawk* as it would have been to Liston or Munden. Why should he not be like me? Why should I not be like him, if I can? And *Affable Hawk* was so like Mathews that his portrayal of the character did more harm than good. To be such an attractive, accomplished swindler as *Affable*

Hawk seemed to the youth of the town a fine thing and a worthy ambition.

Mathews had wonderful powers of mimicry, a good speaking and singing voice, and marvellous elocutionary abilities. He could speak with the greatest rapidity, and at the same time the utmost distinctness. He was not a character actor in the sense that he could assume a personality other than his own, but through his own personality he could convey character uncommonly well. Mere words, more especially the words of one who never saw him, cannot, of course, convey the sparkling brilliancy of his comedy or the charm of his person, but a perusal of his published plays, letters, and speeches conveys a good idea of the nature and scope of his abilities. He had no tragic power whatsoever. On the rare occasions when he did have to handle a serious or moving situation in a play, he did not relish it, and was glad when it was over—so was the audience!

As an author he wrote things to please himself and to suit himself. When he died they, for the most part, died with him, having fulfilled their purpose. He was not so much an author as an adapter. In fact, he was an adapter all round. Plays and parts were all adapted to his own irresistible personality. There is no doubt that he was an artist; indeed, he was one before he was an actor.

His appearance, his dress, his very life, were all works of art.

As a character he was not at all what he was popularly supposed to be, a gay, reckless spendthrift. His frequent bankruptcies, and his early associations and general air of breeding and "buckishness" on the stage, coupled with the fact that he understood and played such parts so well, gave him an undeserved reputation.

Although undoubtedly extravagant, he was not recklessly or culpably so, and the size and number of his embarrassments were due quite as much to ill-luck as to bad management, certainly not to culpable mismanagement. They were also due to a large-hearted generosity, with which he was too ready to credit other people. Moreover, in spite of his marvellous popularity, he was never the least bit spoilt, and in spite of his grand friends, not the least bit of a snob.

In the very distinct line of business of being oneself upon the stage, Charles Mathews has evidently never been surpassed and probably never will be.

COMEDY AND TRAGEDY

FREDERICK ROBSON

1822 (?)–1864

THOMAS ROBSON BROWNBILL, commonly, and for all time, known as Frederick Robson, was born, according to his own account, at Margate in 1822.

He showed precocious propensities very early in life. As a small boy he is said to have seen Edmund Kean, and to have given startling imitations of those wonderful electric flashes that fitfully illuminated the twilight of the great tragedian's career. Robson's father died whilst he was still quite a boy, and he went to live with his mother in Henry Street, Vauxhall. Thomas (as he was then called) had to turn his thoughts seriously to some profession ; nature had already turned them to one, but that one neither his mother nor his friends would hear of. He was given his choice of several others and selected that of engraver, and was bound apprentice to Mr. Smellie, a copperplate engraver of Bedfordbury Court, Covent Garden. Mr. Smellie was the printer of Cruikshank's plates. The odd-looking little apprentice, with his small body and huge head covered with black ringlets, working away at his trade whilst visionary pictures of Edmund Kean and *Richard III* flitted across his mind, would have

FREDERICK ROBSON.

made a good subject for a picture by Cruikshank. When "Billy," as he was called in Bedfordbury Court, was not working at his job—to do him justice he generally was—he was either acting in amateur theatricals or entertaining his friends in the Court with imitations of the many oddities to be seen in and around Covent Garden. If there were as many then as there are now, he had plenty of scope. Nor was the neighbourhood a very wise one to choose, if he was to be kept out of the drama's way.

His first appearance as an amateur was as *Simon Mealbags* in a play called "*Grace Huntley*," played at the old Amateur Theatre in Catherine Street, Strand. But he worked steadily at his engraving, and more than half of his seven years' apprenticeship was served when his master suddenly shut up shop and went to Scotland, and Billy was left to fend for himself. He did not at once, as might have been expected, go on the stage, but set up in business as Mr. Robson Brownbill, engraver, in Brydges Street, Covent Garden. He continued his amateur acting, and was very popular with his audiences in the song and character of *Lord Lovel*. The engraving business evidently did not prosper, his heart was not in it, and, moreover, it hurt his eyes. So in a twelvemonth Mr. Robson Brownbill, engraver, disappeared from the scenes, and Mr. Frederick Robson, actor, came on them. He accepted an engagement in the country, and his first appearance was made as "second utility" in a small theatre in Whitstable. What the duties of "second utility" may be I do not know. "First utility" does everything, so second probably does nothing. But Robson did one good thing. He acquired the Kentish dialect, afterwards so effective in "*The Porter's Knot*" and other plays. From Whitstable he moved gradually northwards, appearing at all sorts of towns from Uxbridge to Glasgow, then coming southwards again until he fetched up in London, where, after an unsuccessful season at the Standard Theatre, he suddenly leapt into fame at the Grecian Saloon Theatre, in the City Road. The Grecian Theatre was said to be built on the site of the old "Eagle" at Hoxton, famous wherever English is spoken or sung as the place where the weasel goes pop! It was presided over at that time by its resplendent founder, Thomas Rouse, generally known as "Bravo Rouse," from the receptions he got, and saw that he got, from his patrons when he appeared in his box of an evening. There is some doubt as to the play in which Robson made his first appearance. One writer, who claims to have been present on the occasion, says it was in the old farce called the "*Illustrious Stranger*," other historians say in "*The Wags of Windsor*," in which he played *John Lump*. Whichever it was it was a great success, and he followed it up with many other of those comical-cum-tragical parts and songs which afterwards drew all London to the Olympic. Sing-songs were often organized after the regular entertainments at the Grecian, and Robson would mount on a table and move his audiences to alternate tears and laughter. In 1850 he was engaged by Mr. Henry Webb as principal comedian for the Queen's Theatre, Dublin. There he played for three years, his engagement unhappily ending in somewhat of a cloud. When playing a drunken scene his audience mistook a certain word for priest and promptly presumed it to be a studied insult to their religion, and Robson, like many great actors before him, was the unfortunate scapegoat of a riot. He left Dublin in 1853, and was engaged by Farren to succeed Compton at the Olympic Theatre.

He made a very favourable impression upon his first appearance on 28th March, 1853, as *Tom Twig* in "*Catching an Heiress*," but the town first got a glimpse of his real powers in the following month when he appeared in Talfourd's burlesque of "*Macbeth.*" Beneath the tomfoolery of the travesty lurked some of the blood-curdling terror of the play, and Robson's *Macbeth* was illuminated with flashes of real tragedy the like of which had not been seen since the days of Edmund Kean. *Macbeth* was followed by *Shylock*, and folk regretted that he was not playing Shakespeare in lieu of Talfourd. *Medea* followed, and the great Ristori, the original creator of the character, came one night to see it. Robson was dreadfully nervous, but his acting did not suffer, and the astounded Ristori rushed round after the performance, escorted by Lord Granville, and overwhelmed the poor, great, little man with congratulations. After she had gone Robson, who was a bundle of nerves, broke down and cried like a child.

Later on he played the serious part of *Desmarets* in "*Plot and Passion*" with such stealthy and insinuating villainy, that folk began to wonder where his limits were, if they were anywhere! In the same season he played some of his farces and sang his great song "Villikens and his Dinah," by E. L. Blanchard, in Mayhew's "*Wandering Minstrel.*" One would not have thought that a chorus confined to the words

"Too-roo-lal—Too-roo-ral-lay"

would offer much scope for either comedy or tragedy, but Robson brought out both qualities so intensely that tears of laughter and sorrow chased each other down the cheeks of his audience. In later years, when he had got into the bad habit of addressing his audience, he used to say in the midst of their laughter, "Ladies and Gentlemen, this is not a comic song," and it very soon wasn't!

Robson now became permanently settled at the Olympic, and was admittedly the first comedian of his day. Many thought him the greatest tragedian also, and all, the greatest dramatic genius. His most popular parts were *The Yellow Dwarf* of Planché, *Masaniello* in Brough's burlesque of that name, *Prince Richcraft* in "*The Discreet Princess*," painful in its intensity and realism, and his *Daddy Hardacre* in the play of that name made his audience wish to see him play "*King Lear*." "*Daddy Hardacre*" was an adaptation from a French play called "*La Fille L'Avare*." Robson, as the old miser who finds that his secret horde has been stolen by his daughter to save a lover in distress, gave a terrible performance of the old man, half crazed with his troubles and torn between his love for his money and his daughter. Another wonderful piece of acting was his *Job Wort* in Tom Taylor's "*Blighted Being*." *Job* was a poor, unappreciated, misunderstood author. Fancying himself unappreciated not only by the public, but by the girl he loved, he decides to commit suicide, and a friendly chemist reads him a lesson by pretending to sell him some poison. *Job* drinks the harmless mixture, and then is seized with such terror at the thought of dying that he very nearly does it. Robson's rendering of the ghastly yet ludicrous situation of the poor wretch was the meeting-place of the extremes of tragedy and comedy. He played on the emotions of his audience like strings, and unfortunately on his own nerves too. He had not the supreme ability to detach himself from the emotion or passion he happened to be portraying at the time.

In 1857, on the retirement of Alfred Wigan, he took the Olympic in partnership with W. S. Emden, and remained part lessee until his death in 1864. He played many parts, most of them in burlesque, tragicomedy, and domestic drama. *Mazeppa* was his principal new success in burlesque. He played in "*The Lighthouse*" and the "*Red Vial*" by Wilkie Collins.

As *Dogbriar*, in Watts Phillips' "*Camilla's Husband*," by his consummate ability and sincerity he converted an artificial, disjointed, thumbnail stage-type into a convincing character. *Peter Probity* in "*The Chimney Corner*" and *Sampson Burr* in "*The Porter's Knot*" were his two greatest triumphs in domestic drama, especially the latter, with which his name will always be associated. It tells the story of an old railway porter who has retired and managed to save a small fortune, with the aid of which he hopes to make his son a doctor. But that young man has been sowing wild oats, and returns home deeply in debt. Old Sampson secretly pays the debt, helps his son to emigrate, and then returns to his barrow and his work, telling his wife that he has had heavy losses on the stock exchange! But the luggage is heavier than the losses, and the poor old man has a very hard time of it, till his son comes back from abroad, a successful doctor, and repays the debt. There was, as can be imagined, plenty of scope in this play for Robson's peculiar gifts. His comic relief was certainly a relief and a necessary antidote to his tragedy, which sometimes became so intense as to be almost unbearable.

It was in "*Camilla's Husband*" that, on 14th November, 1862, he made his last appearance on the stage. He remained, however, a lessee of the Olympic until his death in 1864. His last appearances were as fitful and tragic as Edmund Kean's, and the same enemy was the cause of his downfall. He suffered terribly from stage-fright, and would drink copious draughts of stimulant during the terrible ordeal of waiting for his cue. But the trouble only increased as time went on, and towards the end of his career he would cry piteously in the wings, "I daren't go on, I daren't go on," and often had to be pushed on.

During his brilliant but all too short tenancy of the Olympic, Robson got through a great deal of hard work and frequently, indeed generally, played in the curtain-raiser or the after-piece. Of these perhaps the most famous were "*Boots at the Swan*," "*Poor Pillicoddy*," "*Alfred the Great*," and "*The Lottery Ticket*."

He died on 12th August, 1864.

In character Robson was painfully nervous, restless, and excitable. He was fond of flowers, and a good garden soothed him. His friend, J. L. Toole, tried hard to persuade him to go in for a little gardening. He seemed to have the wish, but not the power to be domestic. He was married, and had two sons who both became actors. On the whole his life, as well as his art, bore a miniature resemblance to Edmund Kean.

As an actor, he belonged to the very first rank of comedians and tragedians. The extremes of comedy and tragedy seemed to meet in his one little person. Many affirmed that he could have been a great tragedian had he so willed, and could have played *Lear*, *Macbeth*, or *Richard III* in spite of his diminutive stature and somewhat odd appearance. He was very small, with a very large head and curiously neat little feet and hands. But this should not have presented any serious impediment to his playing great parts. It is better to play a part and not look it than to look it and not play it. A sense of surprise is better than a sense of disappointment. It was, moreover, affirmed that the continued contrasting of tragedy and comedy in Robson's art intensified and magnified both. Much is talked and written of the dramatic value of contrast. As a matter of fact, things generally lose quite as much as they gain by contrast. Dramatically speaking, it is not of great value. Drama does not consist so much in contrast as in concord. The dramatic moment is when two or more things combine together and produce a third. When the sun came out and united the last span of the Forth Bridge, it was a more dramatic situation than if a stroke of lightning had split them asunder. From all accounts Robson got his wonderful effects by very much more legitimate methods than mere contrastic trickery. Those who saw him—there are many still living who did—tell us that there was no straining after effect. Everything was simple and natural. The quality of art is never strained. No good quality is. Robson was a consummate artist, whose equal has probably not been seen on our stage since his death. The fact that he played his own little domestic dramas so wonderfully well does not prove that he could have done far greater things, that because he was wonderful as *Daddy Hardacre* he must necessarily be equally wonderful as *Macbeth*. And the fact that he burlesqued *Macbeth* so successfully is not a proof that he could play it equally successfully. Neither is it a proof that he could not. The fact probably was that whilst Robson had the talent or technique to do anything in the way of acting, he had not the intellectual grasp of a Kean or a Garrick. A great producer might possibly have got a *Lear* out of him, but from what we can gather from the scanty details to hand of his life and character, he could not have conceived and portrayed, of his own accord, these grand characters. He was a wonderful little actor, perfect in his own way, with glimpses of a very much bigger way. Those glimpses he gave to his audience. Had he seen more he would probably have given more. He must have yielded to the compelling force of genius. But he was evidently not cast in quite the same mould as a Kean or a Garrick. Nevertheless, he was cast in a very wonderful mould, and it is not surprising that those who saw what he had to give cried out for more. What he might have done is conjectural. What he did do is historical.

BOOKS CONSULTED

Genest's "Account of the English Stage."

"Dictionary of National Biography."

Lives of Garrick. By Thomas Davies, Percy Fitzgerald, Joseph Knight.

"Memoirs of Tate Wilkinson."

"Garrick et ses Ans Français." By F. A. Hedgecock.

"Garrick and his Circle." By Mrs. Clement Parsons.

"Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D." By James Boswell.

"Thomas Gainsborough: His place in English Art." By Sir Walter Armstrong.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds, first President of the Royal Academy." By Sir Walter Armstrong.

"Life of Charles Macklin." By John Kirkman.

"Memoirs of Charles Macklin."

"Life of Macklin." By Edward Parry. (Eminent Actors Series.)

"Life of John Henderson." By John Ireland.

"Life of John Philip Kemble." By James Boaden. ✓

"Records of my Girlhood." By Fanny Kemble.

"Records of a Later Life." By Fanny Kemble.

Dunlap's "Memoirs of Cooke."

"Life of Edmund Kean." By Barry Cornwall.

"Life of Edmund Kean." By F. W. Hawkins.

"Cox *v.* Kean." A pamphlet.

"Life of Macready." By William Archer. (Eminent Actors Series.)

"Reminiscences of W. C. Macready and Extracts from his Diary." Edited by Sir F. Pollock.

"Macready as I Knew Him." By Lady Pollock.

"Helen Faucit, Lady Martin." By Sir Theodore Martin.
"Life and Times of Charles Kean." By J. W. Cole.
"The Haymarket Theatre." By Cyril Maude.
"Life of the Young Roscius." By J. Merritt.
"Nights at the Play." By Dutton Cook.
"Hours with the Players." By Dutton Cook.
"Representative Actors." By W. Clark Russell.
"My Lifetime." By John Hollingshead.
"Memoirs of J. L. Toole." By Joseph Hatton.
"The Drama of Yesterday and To-day." By Clement Scott.
"Edward Leman Blanchard." By Cecil Howard and Clement Scott.
"The Bath Stage." By B. S. Penley.
"Memoirs of Grimaldi." By "Boz."
"Memoirs of Charles J. Mathews." Edited by Charles Dickens.
"Memoirs of Charles J. Mathews." By Mrs. Mathews.
"The Romance of the Irish Stage." By J. F. Molloy.
"Life and Adventures of Peg Woffington." By J. F. Molloy.
"Life and Times of Edmund Kean." By J. F. Molloy.
"Life of J. S. Munden." By his Son.
Galt's "Lives of the Players."
"Recollections of an Actor." By Walter Donaldson.

And many other books, plays, periodicals, letters, etc., too numerous to mention.

WILLIAM BRENDON AND SON, LTD.
PRINTERS, PLYMOUTH